

COOKING CLASS NEWS

Recently, I was delighted to watch Stanley Tucci's "Searching for Italy" when he visited the Piedmonte region of Italy. This program featured the dish that was taught in our May cooking class with Louie Lombardo, Risotto. It was perfect timing! I learned that there were hundreds of ways to prepare risotto from Tucci's show and seeing the variations made me crave this mouth-watering comfort food.

Louie explained that he was going to prepare an old family recipe handed down from generations. In my book, those are the best.

Louie began the class by explaining that the preparation consisted of warming the chicken broth, soaking the dried mushrooms, and chopping onions, shallots, fresh mushrooms, and garlic. He invited students to come up to the counter to do the chopping. This is a real treat for our students because they get "hands-on" cooking experience.

Once all the chopping was done, we gathered in the kitchen for the next steps, which consisted of sauteing the sausage, onions, shallots, and mushrooms in olive oil. After that, the rice, more olive oil, and butter were combined to coat the rice. Next, the broth was added in ½ cup increments (with salt, pepper, and garlic) and continually stirred until each portion of broth was absorbed. This is what gives risotto a creamy, "melt in your mouth" texture. The risotto was then spooned out of the pan and topped with pepper, Pecorino Romano cheese and garnished with parsley.

As always, one of the best parts of the class is when we have opportunity to eat the prepared food. This was no exception. The risotto was creamy, rich and velvety. In addition, the added sausage made it a main course meal rather than a side dish. It was the perfect end to a perfect evening.

Italian Sausage and Mushroom Risotto Recipe

By Louie Lombardo

Ingredients

- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped; about 1 cup
- 1 shallot, finely chopped; about ¼ cup
- 1 ½ cups Arborio or Carnaroli rice
- 1 lb bulk Italian sausage, if links remove casings
- 1 cup dried mushrooms, reconstituted and finely chopped,

- 1 cup (8 oz) fresh mushrooms cremini or white, finely chopped
- 3 fresh cloves garlic, minced. Remove stem root if older.
- ½ cup Freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano or Pecorino Romano cheese
- Approx. 4 cups chicken broth
- 6 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbsp butter
- Kosher or sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Fresh chopped Italian parsley to garnish
- ½ cup white wine (optional)

Preparation

- 1) Place chicken broth in pot on stove and keep at medium heat, partially covered
- 2) Take dried mushrooms and reconstitute with hot water in a bowl, let soak for approx. 15 to 20 minutes, stir a couple times. Will chop after that time.
- 3) Chop up or mince all ingredients per above list: fresh mushrooms, onions, shallots and garlic

Directions

- 1) Add 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil to a separate large sauté pan over medium heat, then add the sausage. Stir and break up the sausages until they are in smaller pieces. Once cooked remove the sausages and place in a bowl for later.
- 2) In the same large sauté pan, add 1 tablespoon of butter and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, then add the chopped onions and shallots and cook over medium-high heat. Cook until translucent but not browned.
- 3) Add both the finely chopped reconstituted dry mushrooms along with the fresh chopped white or cremini mushrooms and stir into mixture.
- 4) In the same large sauté pan, add 2 more tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil and 2 tablespoons of butter and stir in the rice, stir constantly until rice is fully coated. If dry add additional oil. Cook for approx. 1 minute.
- 5) Optional-If using white wine, add to sauté pan and stir until it reduces.
- 6) Add approx. ½ cup of broth to pan, stirring so the rice does not stick.
- 7) Add minced garlic, salt and freshly ground pepper and stir.
- 8) Add approx. ½ cup of broth and stir, as the rice absorbs the broth it will grow.
- 9) Add back in the cooked sausage and stir into mixture. Keep adding the broth a ½ cup at a time and keep stirring to get it all absorbed.
- 10) Once all the broth has been added, absorbed and stirred in, remove from the heat. You want it to be al dente.

- 11) As you spoon out your portions, add additional freshly ground black pepper to taste and grate the Parmigiano Reggiano over the top of the serving. Top with freshly chopped Italian parsley as garnish.
- 12) Buon Appetito!

Please join us for our upcoming cooking classes:

Thursday, June 2nd, 7:00 p.m. – Pollo al Mattone (Chicken Under a Brick) with Ken Borelli / If you want the crispiest chicken on the outside and juiciest chicken on the inside, come and learn how to make this scrumptious chicken. No need to bring a brick as Ken will provide all the supplies! / \$25 members, \$30 non-members / At the Hall

Thursday, August 4th, 7:00 p.m. – Cucidati (fig cookies, meaning “little bracelets” in Italian) with Joe Lucito / Come and learn how to make these famous Sicilian cookies. / \$25 members, \$30 non-members / At the Hall

To enroll in the classes, please call 408-293-7122 to RSVP or register online at:

<https://form.jotform.com/212754933891061>

We hope to see you there!