

Butternut Squash Risotto

*Leave out the bacon and use vegetarian stock and a Parmesan substitute to make this suitable for vegetarians.
Serves 4 as a starter, 2 as a main*

Ingredients:

- 350g diced butternut squash, roasted
- A splash of olive oil
- 100g butter
- 1 small red onion
- 6 pieces of pancetta or smoked streaky bacon
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 200g risotto rice
- 50mls dry white wine
- 700mls hot chicken or vegetable stock
- 80g grated Parmesan, plus more to garnish
- A bunch of fresh oregano leaves
- Salt and pepper

Method:

- Start by roasting your butternut squash in that same way as for the Sausage, Butternut Squash and Gnocchi Bake. This can be done in advance if needed but if you dice it small enough, the squash will be cooked in the same length of time as it takes to make the risotto. I like to have some larger pieces that will hold their shape when stirred into the risotto and smaller cubes that will blend into the rice.
- Heat the oil and 50g of the butter in a heavy saucepan over a medium heat. Very finely dice the onion and pancetta and add to the pan. Cook gently for about 10 minutes until the onion is softened but not browned and the bacon is crisp. Season lightly with some salt and pepper now.
- Add the crushed garlic and cook for a further minute.
- Pour in the rice and stir well until all the grains are completely coated with the butter and oil mixture. Add the white wine and cook until it has mostly evaporated.
- Add a ladleful of the hot stock to the rice, stirring occasionally until it is all absorbed.
- Keep gradually adding the stock until all liquids have been absorbed and the rice has a bit of a bite to it. The risotto should be thick and creamy but the rice should still ooze when you put it on the plate. So you may not need to use all of the stock but likewise, you may have to add water to loosen it slightly.
- Stir in the roasted butternut squash.
- When it is done, remove from the heat and quickly add the Parmesan, the fresh herbs and the remaining butter and stir through completely.
- Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper if needed.
- Top with more grated Parmesan and serve immediately.