

From Marie – July 2013 W2 (July 14)

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Risotto with Spring Vegetables, Tomato, and Basil

From: [Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking, by Marcella Hazan](#)

For 6 servings

- 1 medium or 2 small zucchini
 - 5 cups homemade meat broth, OR 1 cup canned beef broth diluted with 4 cups water
 - 3 tablespoons butter
 - 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 - 1/3 cup chopped onion
 - 1/3 cup carrot diced very fine
 - 1/3 cup celery diced very fine
 - Salt
 - 2 cups Arborio or other imported Italian risotto rice
 - ½ cup shelled fresh young peas or thawed frozen peas
 - 1 ripe, firm, fresh tomato, skinned raw with a peeler, seeded, and diced fine
 - 1/3 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano cheese
 - 6 or more fresh basil leaves, washed and shredded by hand
1. Soak the zucchini in cold water, scrub them clean, and cut off both ends. Dice them very fine.
 2. Bring the broth to a very slow, steady simmer on a burner near where you'll be cooking the risotto.
 3. Put 2 tablespoons of the butter, all the vegetable oil, and the chopped onion in a broad, sturdy pot, turn on the heat to medium high, and cook the onion until it becomes colored a fine golden brown.
 4. Add the diced carrot and celery, and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring from time to time to cook them well. Add the diced zucchini, one or two pinches of salt, and cook for 8 minutes more, stirring occasionally.
 5. Using a slotted spoon or skimmer, remove half the vegetables in the pot, and set aside. Turn the heat to high. Add the rice, stirring quickly and thoroughly until the grains are coated well. If using fresh peas, add now.
 6. Add ½ cup of simmering broth, and cook the rice, stirring constantly with a long wooden spoon, wiping the sides and bottom of the pot clean as you stir, until all the liquid is gone. When there is no more liquid in the pot, add another ½ cup, continuing always to stir in the manner described above. Maintain heat at a lively pace.
 7. When the rice has cooked for 20 to 25 minutes, add the cooked vegetables you set aside earlier, the diced tomato, and the thawed frozen peas, if you are not using the fresh. Cook the rice until it is tender, but firm to the bite with barely enough liquid remaining to make the consistency somewhat runny. Off heat, add the remaining tablespoon of butter, and all the grated Parmesan, and stir thoroughly until the cheese melts and clings to the rice. Taste and correct for salt. Mix in the shredded basil. Transfer to a platter and serve promptly.