

HAM AND PEA RISOTTO WITH LEMONY GREEN BEANS AND SAUTÉED TOMATOES

Serves 4.

Have a few shrimp instead of the ham? Chop and throw them in at the end. A bit of grilled salmon? Same drill. Cooked asparagus? Ditto. The leftover leftovers are good cold or hot for lunch the next day. When the risotto is nearly done, heat the beans and sauté the tomatoes and serve along side. Basic risotto cooking instructions [here](#). While the consensus is you must stir risotto constantly until it's done, I don't. It still makes.

For the risotto:

- 1 quart low-sodium chicken stock or broth*
- 2 tablespoons salted butter or olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3/4 cup minced ham
- Kosher salt, fresh ground black pepper, and crushed red pepper
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 3/4 cup frozen or fresh green peas
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 Heat the chicken stock until very hot and place pot on a back burner.

2 On a front burner, heat a 4-quart heavy pot over medium-low flame with butter or oil; add onion, season with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper and a good pinch of the crushed red pepper. Cook until quite tender, but without browning, and stirring often. Add ham and heat through.

3 Stir in rice and let cook for 2 minutes or so and pour in wine. Cook, stirring, until wine is absorbed. Raise the flame to about medium.

4 Stir in a couple of ladles of hot broth. Cook at a nice simmer, stirring, until broth is nearly absorbed.

5 Repeat #4 until nearly all broth is used and rice is nearly tender. Stir in peas with the last ladles of broth and cook another few minutes until rice and peas are quite tender and the risotto is very creamy. Remove pot from heat.

6 Stir in cheese *gently to avoid breaking the grains of rice*. Taste and adjust seasonings. I like a little extra black pepper on top of my rice and it's pretty, too. Serve hot with the beans and tomatoes. (below)

*At altitude, you may need a little more broth to ensure tender rice; I sometimes add a half-cup of water to the broth to make sure I have plenty of liquid. At sea level, you may not need the entire quart of broth.

Cook's Note: For really, really creamy risotto, add another 2 tablespoons of butter with the Parmesan at the end.

For the beans and tomatoes:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups cooked green beans
- 8 small tomatoes cut in half
- Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper
- Juice of half a lemon

Heat oil over medium flame in a deep skillet and add beans; cook until nearly hot. Add tomatoes. Season well with salt and pepper. Serve hot to the side of the risotto and drizzle the beans and tomatoes with lemon juice.