



BRITISH ASPARAGUS RISOTTO

Risotto is a brilliant way of showcasing British asparagus. The slightly woodier stems are sliced and used to add body to the base of the risotto. The tender tips are lightly cooked in a little butter to keep al dente and brightly coloured to be served on top of the risotto. Partnered with a crispy fried soft boiled Burford Brown or quail's egg makes for an indulgent dinner.

Prep time 20 minutes | Cook time 30 minutes | Serves 4

5 Clarence Court Burford Brown eggs
(or 6 quails eggs and 1 hens egg)

2 tablespoons plain flour

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

50g panko bread crumbs

Vegetable oil for deep fat frying

100g unsalted butter

1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped

1 stick celery, trimmed and finely chopped

1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped

16 spears of British asparagus, woody ends removed,
stems sliced and tips kept whole

220g arborio risotto rice

150ml dry white wine

550ml hot vegetable stock

100g Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Zest of 1 lemon finely grated

Place a pan of water on to boil and soft boil 4 of the hen's eggs or the 6 quail's eggs to your liking (around 6 minutes for a hen egg or 1 minute 30 seconds for a quails egg.) Once cooked, plunge the eggs into a bowl of iced water. Carefully peel the eggs and place them back into the bowl filled with fresh cold water.

Place the plain flour on one plate and season well with salt and pepper. Whisk the remaining hen's egg into a bowl and place the panko crumbs on to another plate. Pat the eggs dry then one at a time, roll the egg in flour, dip in the beaten egg, and roll in the panko crumbs. Place the eggs on to another plate and repeat with the remaining eggs until they're all crumbed. Place the plate of eggs in the fridge whilst you make the risotto.

Place a 26cm heavy based frying pan on a medium to low heat and add 40g butter to melt and bubble a little. Then add the chopped onion, celery and garlic with a pinch of salt. Stir with a wooden spoon continuously until the vegetables are softened but not coloured (around 10 minutes). Add the sliced asparagus stems and stir for a further 2 minutes. Stir in the rice and keep stirring for 2 minutes until the rice grains are coated and starting to turn translucent.

Add all the wine to the pan and turn up the heat and stir until it is reduced by $\frac{2}{3}$. Then ladle by ladle stir in the hot vegetable stock until it is absorbed before adding the next. This will take around 10 - 15 minutes until the rice is cooked but with some bite.



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Meanwhile place the vegetable oil on to heat up, have a plate lined with kitchen roll and a slotted spoon ready. When the risotto is nearly cooked add 40g butter and half of the parmesan and most of the asparagus tips. Season to taste, turn off the heat, and place a lid on the pan.

When the oil is hot enough carefully lower the eggs into the hot oil one at a time until the breadcrumbs are lightly golden, this takes around 2 minutes. Carefully remove the eggs with a slotted spoon and place on the plate lined with kitchen roll.

Place a small frying pan on low heat and add the remaining 20g butter. Once melted add the asparagus tips and gently fry for 2 to 3 minutes until soft but still crunchy.

To assemble the dish, spoon the risotto into serving dishes, half the deep fried eggs and carefully distribute over the risottos, top with the lightly buttered asparagus tips. Sprinkle over the remaining Parmesan and a grating of lemon zest.



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