All About Risotto

A specialty of northern Italy, risotto has earned a place as a legendary Italian dish. Rich, creamy and irresistible, it has become a favorite outside its homeland as well. Because risotto can be embellished with any number of savory ingredients, including cheeses, vegetables, meats and seafood, as well as sweet additions, such as dried fruit and chocolate, it will quickly become one of the most versatile and well-loved dishes in your cooking repertoire.

Much of the Italian rice harvest is used for making risotto. Italians have traditionally served it as *primo*, the first course, after the antipasto and before the *secondo*, the meat or fish course. Nowadays, risotto has assumed additional roles in the meal, appearing as a main course or a complementary side dish as well as a first course. Indeed, a bowl of steaming risotto, a crisp green salad, some country bread and a good bottle of wine will delight even the most discriminating diner.

Spring Vegetable Risotto

Many cooks are reluctant to make risotto at home because they believe it needs constant stirring. But in reality, the cook can be a bit more relaxed. As long as you pay attention to the amount of liquid and stir every few minutes, the results will be just as good.

Cook the risotto

In a saucepan over medium heat, bring the broth and wine to a gentle simmer, then maintain the simmer over low heat.

Meanwhile, in a heavy-bottomed saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt the butter with 1 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the onion and sauté until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the rice and cook, stirring constantly, until all the grains are opaque and well coated with the fat, about 1 minute. Add 2 cups of the simmering broth mixture and cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid is absorbed, 3 to 4 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue to add the liquid about 1 cup at a time, stirring occasionally and adding more only after the previous addition has been absorbed.

Sauté the vegetables

While the rice is cooking, in a fry pan over medium heat, warm the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil. Add the zucchini and sauté just until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the peas and cook, stirring, until thawed and heated through, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Finish the risotto

When the rice is tender and creamy but the grains are still al dente at the center, after about 22 minutes, stir in the sautéed vegetables and the mint and cook for 1 minute to heat through. Stir in the cheese. Season with salt and pepper, divide among shallow bowls and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, Weeknight, by Melanie Barnard (Oxmoor House, 2006).

May 2, 2010

Conductivity

Conductivity is the speed at which a metal accepts, retains and transfers heat. In cookware, this means, how fast will it heat up? How long will it stay hot after it is removed from the heat source? How quickly will the heat in the cookware transfer to the food being cooked? The more conductive the material, the faster it will get hot and cook the food. This chart illustrates the differences in conductivity of common metals used in cookware.

100% 90% 80% 70% 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10%

Visit williams-sonoma.com to search our extensive recipe collection, find menus and tips for entertaining, and browse an expanded selection of products in every category.

Ingredients for Spring Vegetable

5 cups vegetable or chicken broth

1 small yellow onion, finely chopped

1 lb. zucchini, cut into ½-inch chunks

3/3 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Salt and freshly ground pepper,

1½ cups dry white wine

1 Tbs. unsalted butter

2 cups arborio rice

2 cups frozen baby peas

1/4 cup minced fresh mint

3 Tbs. olive oil

cheese

to taste

WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Technique Class: Cooking with Copper

Williams-Sonoma made its modest entrance into the history of cookware in 1953. The company's founder, Chuck Williams, was on a trip to France where he discovered the wonderful world of French cooking. From that moment forward, French cuisine and French cooking equipment were vividly etched into his memory.

In 1956 Chuck began selling fine cookware in the wine-producing community of Sonoma, 45 miles north of San Francisco. His small kitchenware shop quickly caught the attention of the Sonoma valley residents who enjoyed cooking. Before that first store opened, most American cooks could not buy specialty cookware.

In 1958 Chuck moved his shop to Sutter Street, in downtown San Francisco, and six months later, Williams-Sonoma was established as an authority in gourmet kitchen essentials. Chuck went to Paris in 1959 to purchase the fine Mauviel copper cookware that he fell in love with during his travels. Within a few years, Williams-Sonoma became the first complete French kitchenware shop in the United States. It featured restaurant cookware in both heavy aluminum and copper, rustic Provençal earthenware, every shape and size of bakeware, plus all of the French chef's tools and cutlery. These products formed the foundation of Williams-Sonoma's kitchenware.

In the years since, a constant flow of new products and ideas from different parts of Europe, as well as from Asia and America, have increased the scope of Williams-Sonoma's offerings. Today Williams-Sonoma carries on Chuck's tradition by providing high-quality professional cookware to both the experienced and novice chef. We continue to have considerable influence over what Americans cook and the tools they cook with.

All About Copper Cookware

One of the best heat conductors, copper transfers heat quickly, distributes it evenly and cools rapidly, offering maximum temperature control. Most copper pieces have a tin or stainless-steel lining to ensure that the pots resist sticking and won't react with acidic foods. Though copper cookware lasts a lifetime, its exterior will develop a patina over time, which can easily be polished.

Caring for Copper

Copper cookware must be hand washed and polished to maintain its appearance. If your copper cookware becomes discolored, slice a lemon in half and salt it, then rub the salted lemon halves over the copper to remove tarnish. Or, use a copper cleaner. Polishing is not required but does restore the original luster. If your copper pans have a tinned interior, this lining may wear thin over the years. To have any copper pans retinned, contact F. Nicholas Retinning at 323-263-0028 or 800-343-9923.

Tips for Copper Care

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for care.
- Let pots and pans cool before washing them.
- Use hot, soapy water and a sponge when hand washing cookware.
- Use wood, nylon, plastic or rubber cleaning tools on nonstick cookware to prevent scratching.
- Don't put wood-handled cookware in the dishwasher or oven; the wood could char, warp or crack.
- Avoid abrasive scouring pads or steel wool when cleaning cooking surfaces unless recommended by the manufacturer.

Mauviel French Copper

Founded in 1830 by two cousins, the Mauviel company is located in Normandy, France, in the aptly named Villedieu-les-Poêles (the "City of Copper"). Knights returning from the crusades in the 12th century settled in the city and introduced the techniques for working with copper that they had learned during their travels to exotic lands such as Morocco.

For nearly five generations, this family-run company has remained in Villedieu-les-Poêles, creating its renowned decorative and traditional copper pans for catering professionals and fine restaurants around the world. Always one to recognize quality craftsmanship, Chuck Williams visited Mauviel in 1959 to learn about their fine copper cookware and to import it for sale in his shop.

Manufacturing Mauviel Copper Cookware

Long prized by professional chefs for its ability to transfer heat quickly, distribute it evenly and cool rapidly, copper offers maximum control and precise timing.

The copper used in Mauviel cookware was originally brought from Brittany, Cornwall, and even from as far away as South America. Today, Mauviel sources their stainless steel-lined copper from Germany. To create these pans, steel is bonded to copper using extreme pressure, which guarantees that the two metals are inextricable. The pieces are then put through the process of drawing, which shapes the pans one at a time on a turning machine known as Tours a Repousser.

Stockpots and fish poachers are lined with malleable tin because stainless steel is too brittle for these larger pieces. The pans are hand hammered to increase strength and correct any defects. Tin is melted and spread with a piece of cotton inside the copper container to create a lining that is safe for cooking.

Mauviel cookware ranges in professional-quality thickness from 2.0 mm to the heavy-gauge thickness of 2.5 mm used for items such as the stew pan. The saucepans and sauté pans are designed with a rolled edge to ensure dripless pouring.

Lids are domed to promote heat circulation and to increase the volume of shallow sauté pans. Bronze handles and other hardware, all created by Mauviel, are then added to the pieces. Designed with professionals in mind, the hardware is affixed with sturdy stainless-steel rivets to last through many years of intensive use.

The final step in Mauviel's manufacturing process is the polishing of each piece, giving it the beautiful gleaming finish that we associate with fine copper cookware, perfect for going from the oven to the table.

Ruffoni Copper Cookware

Founded in Italy by Fremide Ruffoni, the company has dedicated itself to preserving traditional copper-working techniques, while incorporating ongoing research and technological developments in the production process. The resulting cookware is unique, beautiful and functional.

Manufacturing Ruffoni Copper Cookware

Copper was one of the first metals used by man. It did not take long before copper was lined with tin for cooking purposes and to this day, very little has changed in the production process. Because of the techniques used, these pieces cannot be mass-produced. The Hammered Rustica Copper Collection and both fondue sets from Ruffoni are designed exclusively for Williams-Sonoma.

Each piece in the Rustica Copper Collection is fashioned entirely by hand, beginning as a flat copper sheet that is then hammered into the correct shape. The process of pounding the copper alters the molecular composition, creating a stronger finished piece. Hammering copper also allows for greater flexibility in shapes. This control ensures that each piece is the perfect shape for its function. For example, Ruffoni stockpots are wide in the middle and narrower on top, looking very much like old-fashioned cauldrons, a shape that allows for greater infusion of flavors into the food.

Once the pan has been formed, the inside is lined with a thick coating of tin: the tin is melted and literally painted onto the copper interior. Ruffoni uses tin that is produced specifically for them, which allows them to control the alloys and guarantee maximum purity. Finally, the cast brass handles are riveted on and the copper is polished to a glossy shine.

Ruffoni fondue sets are made from sheets of copper or stainless steel that are pressed into shape. The copper pot is lined with tin. Each fondue set includes a porcelain serving insert, fuel burner with snuffing lid and six fondue forks; a ring on top prevents splattering and helps to retain heat. The handles are stainless steel, and the stand is chromed.

Note	23		
			_
			_
			_
			_
			_