

Raspberry Pecan Salad **Tomato-Basil Risotto** **Mocha Almond Ice Cream**



Risotto has become a popular dish in upscale restaurants. Unfortunately, the classic preparation involves a lot of patience and a great deal of stirring. Traditionally, risotto begins by sautéing Arborio rice in butter with a bit of chopped shallot. Then, simmering broth is added one ladle at a time and stirred until the liquid is absorbed. The process continues until all of the broth is added which can sometimes take up to an hour of stirring and ladling. My recipe for Tomato-Basil Risotto includes sautéed chicken breasts, diced fresh tomatoes, fresh basil and shredded Romano cheese. Instead of following the traditional method, rice is sautéed in butter and then cooked in chicken stock like regular rice. It needs to be simmered, covered, for about 15 minutes. The rice will be slightly undercooked since you will need to cook it again. Arborio rice is a high-starch, short-grained Italian rice. Its high starch content provides creaminess to the risotto that can't be duplicated with any other type of rice. You can find it in most local grocery stores. Serve the risotto piping hot with shredded Romano cheese. It's a great one-dish meal, but also delicious accompanied by Raspberry-Pecan Salad. Creamy Mocha-Almond Ice Cream is the perfect ending to this scrumptious summer supper!

Raspberry-Pecan Salad

- 1/2 cup raspberry spreadable fruit
- 1/3 cup raspberry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- 1 avocado
- 1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced
- 2 bunches green onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Combine first 5 ingredients in a blender until smooth. Place greens in a salad bowl, top with remaining ingredients and toss with dressing. Serves 8.

Tomato-Basil Risotto

- 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can plus 1/2 cup chicken stock, divided
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 pound boneless, skinless, chicken breast halves, cubed
- Salt

Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
1 large tomato, diced
1/2 cup shredded Romano cheese
1/4 cup slivered fresh basil leaves

Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in a sauce pan. Add the rice and sauté for 1 minute. Add the wine and the can of chicken broth, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, covered, until rice is almost done, about 15 minutes. Heat the remaining butter in a skillet with the garlic. Add the chicken and sauté until the chicken is almost completely cooked. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Add the prepared rice, remaining 1/2 cup of chicken broth, whipping cream, and diced tomato. Cook, stirring, until the rice is heated through. Stir in the shredded Romano cheese and basil. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

Mocha-Almond Ice Cream

1 cup whole milk
3 (1-ounce) squares semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
3/4 cup sugar
2 tablespoons instant coffee
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup half and half
2 cups heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted

Combine milk and chocolate in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until chocolate is melted. Remove from heat. Stir in sugar, instant coffee and salt. Stir until dissolved. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Pour chilled mixture into freezer container of a 2-quart ice cream maker. Freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Serves 6 to 8.