Main dishes / Italy

Farro Risotto with Herbs and Parmesan

Pearled farro cooked risotto-style — ladle by ladle — until the ancient grain is tender but satisfyingly chewy, bound in a savory Parmigiano cream scented with thyme and finished with a proper mantecatura of cold butter.

Time 50 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- [ ] 2 parts Pearled farro
- [ ] 0.1 parts Garlic cloves, minced
- [ ] 5 parts Vegetable or chicken stock, hot
- [ ] 0.5 parts Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated
- [ ] 0.2 parts Extra-virgin olive oil
- [ ] 0.02 parts Black pepper, freshly ground
- [ ] 0.5 parts Shallots, finely minced
- [ ] 0.5 parts Dry white wine
- [ ] 0.5 parts Unsalted butter, cold, cubed
- [ ] 0.05 parts Fresh thyme, leaves stripped
- [ ] 0.05 parts Salt

Let's make it.

01 Warm the olive oil in a wide, heavy-bottomed saucepan or sauté pan over medium-low heat. Add the minced shallots and cook gently, stirring often, for 5–7 minutes until completely soft, translucent, and sweet — they should not color at all. Add the garlic and thyme leaves; cook 1 more minute until fragrant. Keep the stock in a separate small saucepan over low heat — it must stay hot. Cold stock shocks the starch and breaks the creamy emulsion you are building.

02 Add the dry farro to the pan and stir to coat every grain with the oil and shallot mixture. Toast for 60–90 seconds, stirring constantly, until the grains smell nutty and slightly toasty and the edges of the pan begin to dry. Pour in the white wine all at once — it will sizzle and steam dramatically. Stir constantly until the wine is completely absorbed, which takes 1–2 minutes. The pan should be nearly dry before you add the first ladle of stock.

03 Add a ladleful of hot stock (about 120 ml) to the farro. Stir steadily and let it absorb almost completely before adding the next ladle. Season lightly with salt. Continue this process — ladle, stir, absorb, ladle — for 25–30 minutes total. Do not rush with more than one ladle at a time; each addition works the starch out of the grain and builds the creamy sauce. Farro is ready when the grain is tender throughout but retains a satisfying, gentle chew — al dente is correct. The risotto should flow slowly when you tilt the pan, not hold its shape like a mound.

04 Remove the pan from the heat completely. Add the cold butter cubes and the Parmigiano-Reggiano all at once. Stir vigorously in a circular motion — some cooks use a wooden spoon, others shake the pan in a rapid rocking motion. The goal is mantecatura: a violent stirring that emulsifies the cold butter and cheese into the hot starch, creating a tight, glossy, creamy sauce. The risotto will thicken noticeably. Add a few grinds of black pepper. Cover the pan and rest for exactly 2 minutes — this rest is essential and non-negotiable. Serve immediately in warm bowls.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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