

Risotto with Roasted Butternut Squash and Kale

From *Everyday Greens*, by Annie Somerville

This is one of my favorite recipes ever. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful and worth every minute it takes to prepare.

Vegetable stock, 7 to 8 cups*

1 small butternut squash, cut into ½” cubes – about 2 cups

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 teaspoons minced garlic

salt and pepper

½ bunch of kale, stems removed – about 2 cups packed leaves

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 medium leeks, white parts only, cut in half lengthwise, sliced and washed – about 3 cups

1 ½ cups Carnaroli or Arborio rice

½ cup white wine

A pinch of two of nutmeg

2 ounces of Fontina cheese, grated, about ½ cup

½ ounce Parmesan cheese, grated, 2 to 3 tablespoons, plus more to garnish

Make the vegetable stock and keep it warm over low heat. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Toss the squash in a baking dish with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, half of the garlic, ¼ teaspoon of salt, and a pinch of pepper. Roast until tender, about 20 minutes.

Bring a pot of water to a boil and salt lightly. Drop in the kale and cook until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain and when cool, squeeze out any excess moisture. Coarsely chop the kale and set aside.

Heat the butter and remaining oil in a large sauté pan and add the leeks, ¼ teaspoon salt, and a pinch of pepper. Cook over medium heat until the leeks begin to soften, about 2 minutes; add the remaining garlic and cook 1 minute more. Add the rice and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the stock, 1 cup at a time, stirring gently, allowing the rice to absorb each cup after adding more.

After the rice has absorbed 4 cups of stock, stir in the wine, the squash, and the kale. Lower the heat to medium low and cook, continuing to add the stock 1 cup at a time, until the rice is tender and the squash is beginning to break down. The grains should be a little toothy and the risotto quite saucy. Add a pinch of nutmeg, and stir in the cheeses. Adjust the seasoning with salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste. Serve in warm bowls and sprinkle with Parmesan.

Yield: Serves 6 generously.

**Everyday Greens* includes a recipe for homemade vegetable stock – but you can also use a quality store-bought variety. I like the brand “Imagine.”

Greens and Mushroom Panini

By Martha Rose Shulman, *New York Times: Recipes for Health*

1/2 pound stemmed and washed sturdy greens, like kale, chard, turnip greens or mustard greens

1 medium-size Portobello mushroom (for stuffing), sliced 1/2 inch thick

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced (to taste)

Salt and freshly ground pepper

1 1/2 ounces Gruyère or a mixture of Gruyère and Parmesan, sliced very thin or grated (about 1/3 cup)

4 slices whole grain bread

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Fill a bowl with ice water. When the water in the pot comes to a boil, salt generously and add the greens. Bring the water back to a boil, and boil for two to three minutes, depending on the sturdiness of the greens. Transfer to the ice water to cool for a few minutes, and then drain and squeeze out excess water. Chop coarsely.

Preheat a Panini grill. Brush both sides of the mushroom slices with olive oil, and grill for one to two minutes. Season if desired. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat, and add the garlic. Cook, stirring, until the garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds, and stir in the greens. Toss to coat with oil, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat.

Sprinkle half the cheese over two of the bread slices, and top the cheese with a few mushroom slices. Next, pile half the greens on top, and press them down with the back of a spoon. Top the greens with the remaining cheese, and cover with the remaining bread. Brush the outside of the sandwich with a little olive oil. Place in the Panini maker, and grill for three to five minutes until the cheese has melted and the bread is toasty.

Yield: Makes two Panini.