

Dinner and A Book

Episode 612

Menu:

Risotto with Mushrooms
Veal cutlets with lemon
Spinach sautéed with garlic
Cream Puffs

Primo (first course)

Risotto with mushrooms

1/3 c dried porcini mushrooms (soaked in 1 _ c warm water)
1 _ c fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced
Juice of _ fresh lemon
1/3 c butter
2 Tbsp finely chopped parsley
4 c chicken or beef broth
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 _ c Arborio rice
1 _ c dry white wine
3 Tbsp Parmesan or Romano cheese
Salt & pepper to taste

1. Soak dried porcini mushroom in warm water for 40 minutes and set aside.
2. Slice fresh mushrooms and stir in lemon juice.
3. Heat one third of the butter in pan and add fresh mushrooms. Sautee until lightly browned. Add parsley and cook for 30 seconds. Remove from heat. Place in small bowl and set aside.
4. Chop porcini mushrooms. Add to sautéed mushrooms.
5. Drain water porcini were soaking in through cheese cloth (double layer) and place in pot with the 4 cups of broth. Bring to boil and then lower heat to lowest setting.
6. Add another third of butter in the pan with the olive oil. Sautee onion until lightly browned.
7. Add rice to onion and stir until rice is covered in oil. Stir and cook for 2 minutes.

8. Add mushroom mixture (porcini & fresh sautéed) to onion and rice. Stir. Add wine and cook for 1-2 minutes.

9. Add a ladle of broth mixture to rice and stir. Once the liquid has been absorbed, add another ladle of broth and stir. Continue adding liquid a ladle at a time until rice is cooked al dente. (You may use all the liquid or not, or you may have to add a little water. Taste the rice to ensure desired result). Salt & pepper to taste.

10. Remove pot from heat. Add remaining third of butter and cheese. Let rest for 2 minutes and serve.

Secondo (second course)

Veal cutlets with lemon

4 veal cutlets (chicken may be used)

2-3 Tbsp flour

4 Tbsp butter

1 _ c olive oil

1 _ c dry white wine or Italian dry white vermouth

3 Tbsp lemon juice

Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Lemon wedges and fresh parsley to garnish

1. Place each cutlet between two sheets of plastic wrap and pound until very thin.

2. Cut the pounded cutlets in halves or quarters. Season with salt & pepper. Coat with flour.

3. Melt the butter with half the oil in a large, heavy frying pan until sizzling. Add as many cutlets as the pan will hold. Fry over medium to high heat for 1-2 minutes on each side until lightly colored. Remove cutlets from pan and keep hot. Add the remaining oil and cook the remaining cutlets in the same way.

4. Remove the pan from the heat and add the wine (or vermouth) and the lemon juice. Stir vigorously to mix with the pan juices. Return to the heat and place all of the cutlets in the pan. Spoon sauce over the cutlets until they are coated thoroughly in the sauce and are heated through.

5. Serve immediately. Garnish with lemon wedges and parsley.

Spinach sautéed with garlic

1 _ pounds fresh spinach

3 cloves of garlic

3-4 Tbsp olive oil

Splash of chicken broth (optional)

1 _ lemon (optional)

1. Steam spinach just until leaves wilt. Set in bowl.
2. Heat olive in frying pan. Add spinach. Toss and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add minced garlic (some prefer thin slices of garlic for a more subtle garlic flavor). Toss and cook for 1 minute. A splash of chicken broth may be used for flavor.
4. Optional: a bit of freshly squeezed lemon. Serve.

Dolce ("sweet"/dessert)

Cream puffs

1 _ c butter

1 c water

1 tsp salt

1 _ c flour

4 eggs

Filling for cream puffs (choice of custard, whipped cream, mousse, etc.)

1. Preheat oven to 370 degrees.
2. In a small pot, mix butter, water, salt and bring to a boil.
3. Take pot off heat and quickly mix in flour.
4. Return pot to low heat and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Transfer mixture to bowl and let cool for 8 minutes.
6. Add and stir in eggs, one at a time.
7. Place thick batter (like a thick mayonnaise consistency) in a pastry bag.
8. Pipe small, walnut sized dollops on a parchment lined cookie sheet.
9. Cook for 35 minutes until golden brown.
10. Turn oven off. Partially open oven door and let cream puffs slowly cool in the oven for one hour.
11. When cream puffs are thoroughly cool, cut and opening in each one and fill with custard, whipped cream, or mousse. A pastry bag works best. Close opening and sprinkle with powdered sugar.