

Asparagus, mint and bacon risotto

Taking up the challenge for the second time to give us a seasonal family menu for under a fiver is Rosemary from The Bridge in Bidford-on Avon. Her asparagus, mint and bacon risotto couldn't be simpler, and positively sings with the flavours of spring...

Ingredients

1 bundle of English asparagus, each spear cut into 6 pieces
700ml chicken or vegetable stock
1 medium onion, finely chopped
5 thin rashers of streaky bacon, chopped
200g Arborio risotto rice
150ml dry white wine
1 tbsp chopped mint
75g butter
5 tbsp freshly grated parmesan

Method

Bring the stock to a gentle boil. Throw in the asparagus spears and simmer for 2 minutes only. Take out the asparagus and set aside.

In a heavy pan, melt the butter, add the bacon and cook until it starts to frazzle. Add the onions and cook gently until soft. Add the rice and stir well until coated with the butter.

Pour in the white wine and allow to bubble gently. After a couple of minutes add a ladle of hot stock. Continue to stir allowing the rice to absorb the stock before adding another ladle. Continue until you have used up all or most of the stock. This will take about 15-20 minutes. Check the texture of the rice as you go – it should be still slightly firm when cooked.

Add the asparagus to the risotto then allow to stand for 5 minutes. Add the mint, parmesan, some black pepper and salt.

Serve with a rocket salad and extra parmesan if required.

Vinology's wine choice

To drink

Matt Cowan from Vinology recommends: **Araldica Madonna Gavi 2007**

"We're really excited about our new zesty white wine from Northern Italy, which is the perfect accompaniment to this classic Italian dish. Better still, it's on a special introductory offer at the moment for only £5.99 (RRP £9.99)!"