

ORZOTTO (BARLEY RISOTTO)

I love barley, especially in winter, when those nutty, wholesome grains call to me with a song of nourishment, fortification and cosiness. Orzo is Italian for 'barley' and when you make a risotto with it, it's called orzotto. It's a specialty of the north-eastern part of Italy close to Venice. Orzotto is as versatile as risotto so think of this as a base recipe that you can adapt, just as you would risotto. It's a great 'bottom of the fridge' meal.



Serves: 4-6

Time: 45 minutes



INGREDIENTS

½ cauliflower, broken into small florets
extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp flaked salt
1 brown onion, halved
3 cloves garlic
150 grams (5 oz) celery, roughly chopped
1 medium zucchini, roughly chopped
250 grams (9 oz) pearl barley
50 grams (2 oz) white wine, optional (any white wine is OK)
900 grams (32 oz) water (or stock)
1 tbsp vegetable stock paste (if not using stock)
Parmesan or grana padano, grated, to serve
freshly ground pepper



METHOD

Thermomix method

1. Preheat oven to 170°C (340°F). Place cauliflower on a baking tray and toss with olive oil and ½ tsp flaked salt. Toss after 15 minutes and continue to roast until golden brown.
2. Place onion, garlic, celery and zucchini in mixing bowl and chop **5 sec/speed 5**. Scrape down sides of mixing bowl, ensuring mixture is consistently chopped. Chop for a further **2 sec/speed 5** if necessary.
3. Add ½ tsp salt and 50 grams (2 oz) olive oil. Cook **5 min/100°C (212°F)/speed 1**.
4. Add barley and wine. Cook **2 min/100°C (212°F) / speed 1**.
5. Add water and stock paste. Scrape base of mixing bowl. Cook **35 min/100°C (212°F)/speed 1.5** or until orzotto is thick but pourable and barley is cooked but still nutty.
6. Pour into serving bowls. Top with roasted cauliflower and grated cheese. Drizzle with olive oil and finish with pepper.

Traditional method

1. Preheat oven to 170°C (340°F).
2. Place cauliflower on a baking tray and toss with olive oil and ½ tsp flaked salt. Toss after 15 minutes and continue to roast until golden brown.

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3. Finely dice onion, garlic, celery and zucchini and saute in a large pot that has a lid with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt and 50 grams (2 oz) olive oil until translucent and soft.

4. Add barley and wine. Cook for a few minutes, stirring until barley grains are glossy.

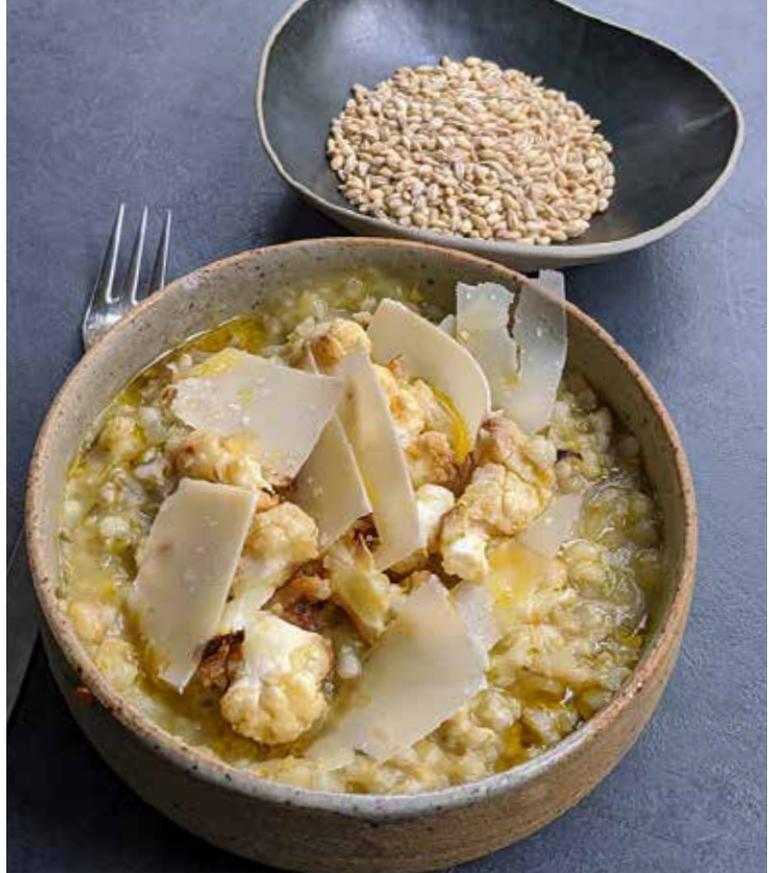
5. Add water and stock paste. Stir. Place lid over pot and allow to come to a simmer. Stir and remove lid. Continue to cook, stirring frequently until orzotto is thick but pourable and barley is cooked but still nutty.

6. Pour into serving bowls. Top with roasted cauliflower and grated cheese. Drizzle with olive oil and finish with pepper.

Tips

- Add 100 grams (3.5 oz) chopped pancetta to saute with vegetables.
- Add 100 grams (3.5 oz) sliced mushrooms along with the stock.
- Add 100 grams (3.5 oz) peas just before barley is fully cooked.
- Instead of cauliflower, try roasted sweet potato, capsicum or eggplant.
- Top with pan-fried croutons and chorizo.

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Serve: 4-6



SHOPPING LIST:

- Cauliflower (½)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Flaked salt (1 tsp)
- Brown onion (1)
- Garlic cloves (3)
- Celery (150 grams / 5 oz)
- Zucchini, medium (1)
- Pearl barley (250 grams / 9 oz)
- White wine (50 grams / 2 oz)
- Vegetable stock paste (1 tbsp)
(if not using stock)
- Parmesan or grana padano
- freshly ground pepper



NOTES & TIPS:

→ optional (any white wine is OK)

→ if not using stock