

# The Quick Cook

MEALS IN 30 MINUTES OR LESS

by CHRISTINE WEBER HALE

## WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

15-Minute Pumpkin Risotto  
Spinach Salad  
with Dried Cranberries  
Crusty Italian Bread  
Golden Delicious Apples  
and Gingersnap Cookies

## Take an instant for risotto

■ Most traditional Italian cooks are demanding specific about risotto. Use only arborio rice. Toast it gently in butter. Add hot broth, one ladleful at a time, stirring until every drop is absorbed. The cheese, of course, must be freshly grated.

Chances are, by the time the dish reaches perfection, an intensive hour has been invested.

But if you have a risotto hankering and not much time, take the offensive. Use instant (precooked) rice. Just put it in the pan and add seasonings and

## FOUR MORE HIGH-SPEED RISOTTO RECIPES

Follow the recipe at right, omitting the nutmeg and pumpkin, and instead:

1. Cook asparagus slices and soaked porcini mushrooms with the onion until onion is limp, then add grated lemon peel.
2. Stir in crumbled gorgonzola cheese instead of parmesan, along with thin slices of ripe pear. Sprinkle portions with chopped roasted, salted pistachios.
3. Add bite-size pieces of cooked chicken, pork, sausage, or small shrimp, blanched broccoli, and canned roasted red pepper strips along with the cheese.
4. Stir in shredded smoked mozzarella cheese instead of parmesan, along with chopped yellow tomatoes, pan-browned bits of prosciutto, and slivered basil leaves.



JAMES CARRIER

*Precooked rice is the surprise ingredient in this fast and creamy risotto.*

broth blended with a little cornstarch to create the risotto creaminess, and bring it to a boil with a stir or two. You'll be ready to eat a good 45 minutes before the purist gets out of the kitchen.

## 15-Minute Pumpkin Risotto

**Prep and cook time:** About 15 minutes

**Makes:** 4 servings

- 1 onion (about 8 oz.), chopped
- 2 teaspoons butter or margarine
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3½ cups chicken broth
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 3 cups precooked dried white rice

About ¾ cup grated parmesan cheese

Salt and fresh-ground pepper

1. In a 4- to 5-quart pan, combine onion, butter, and nutmeg. Stir often over high heat until onion is limp, 3 to 4 minutes.
2. Mix the cornstarch smoothly with a little of the chicken broth. Add to pan along with remaining broth, wine, pumpkin, and rice. Stir mixture over high heat until boiling, 3 to 4 minutes. Cover and remove from heat; let stand 5 minutes.
3. Stir in ¾ cup cheese. Sprinkle portions with additional cheese and add salt and pepper to taste.

Per serving: 461 cal., 16% (75 cal.) from fat; 16 g protein; 8.3 g fat (4.9 g sat.); 75 g carbo (3.2 g fiber); 402 mg sodium; 20 mg chol. ♦

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Have a question, quick tip, or favorite recipe you can make in 30 minutes or less? Send it to *The Quick Cook*, *Sunset Magazine*, 80 Willow Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025, or send e-mail (including your full name, street address, and phone number) to [quickcook@sunsetpub.com](mailto:quickcook@sunsetpub.com)