

Greek Spinach Risotto (Spanakorizo)

This is a traditional Greek dish. I have added a little more rice to the traditional recipe to make it more appealing to children. This dish is a great way to get kids (and adults) to eat spinach which is loaded in antioxidants.

This dish is quick and easy, a tasty way to eat the antioxidant rich spinach, and a great side dish to meat, chicken or fish - even the kids will like it.

Ingredients (serves 6-8)

- 1 large bunch of spinach, chopped, but not too fine (make sure you wash it well to remove sand)
- 1 large onion finely sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1/4 cup chopped dill (or 1 teaspoon dried oregano* if you don't have dill)
- 1 1/4 cup long grain rice or arborio rice (if you want the rice to be less creamy in texture use long grain rice like doongara (called "clever rice" in Australia) which also has a lower glycemic index than arborio); if you want a more creamy traditional risotto texture then use arborio rice)
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- juice of 1/2 a lemon and 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 1/4 cup water
(the spinach will also release water so be careful not to add too much water because the dish will become gluggy)
- parmesan cheese

Method

1. In a wide shallow saucepan saute onion and garlic in olive oil on low heat.
2. Add rice and stir for about 5 minutes till rice is coated with oil (this will stop the rice from sticking together)
3. Add parsley and dill.
4. Add chopped spinach and stir through; place lid on saucepan for a few minutes for spinach to wilt.
5. Add water, lemon juice, tomato paste and stir regularly to stop rice from sticking to bottom of pot.
6. Simmer for about 15 minutes (rice should still feel a little firm).
7. Turn heat off and let stand till all liquid is absorbed and rice is soft.
8. Serve with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese or grated romano cheese.

PS. If you wish to re-heat the risotto, it is better to empty the contents of the pot into a pyrex dish and re-heat in the oven; try sprinkling some cheese (e.g mozzarella, parmesan) on the risotto before placing in the oven.

Accompaniments: omelette, feta cheese, fish, meat or chicken.