

# Mushroom and asparagus risotto, but with barley?

As part of our healthier lifestyle thing, we notice an awful lot of “fashionable” things appear and disappear. Sometimes they are good and we add them to our repertoire and other times they are one of those pretend this is as good as the version you know cause you are starving yourself on a diet type thing. One such example of a trend you should avoid, cauliflower pizza bases. Trust us, we tried it so we could blog about it if it was something worth sharing with you guys, and it sooooo isn't. If you want pizza, make a proper pizza base, if you are watching you macros or calories or just trying to restrict the amount of pizza you eat then just don't have pizza all the time. It's better to eat something good and enjoy it than suffer something you don't enjoy and be resentful.

However, there are a few things that are worth sharing and this is one of them, risotto, but made with pearl barley instead of rice.



Ok so the first thing I know some of you will ask is, why on earth would you replace the rice? After all, the rice IS risotto, its integral. And hey you know what, I totally agree.

Risotto is gorgeous and comforting and lovely. This is just another risotto type thing to add to your toolbox with the plus that it adds some whole grains into your diet, which is good and for those of you looking to reduce carbs or calories etc, this offers you something similar to risotto but that you can eat on your diet.

For us, we have been actively trying to increase our consumption of whole grains and reduce the white rice, pasta etc a little. This hits the nail on the head for us because, most importantly, it's tasty as hell, you know by now that we don't suffer poor imitations.

So lets go...

## **Ingredients for two servings**

- mushrooms 100g sliced
- onion finely diced
- thyme chopped 1 tsp
- garlic 2 cloves crushed
- pearl barley 100g
- chicken or vegetable stock 700ml (around, this will depend on how quickly you cook things)
- asparagus, a big handful
- Our trick to add that creaminess – low-fat soft cheese 2 tbsp

## **Let's get cooking**

Fry the mushrooms in a little oil, we use spray of oil to stop us going overboard but you should use whatever oil you chose normally. Once the mushrooms are looking good, scoop them out of the pan and set aside. Next, fry the onion for a few minutes to let them soften a little before adding the

thyme and garlic and letting that infuse for 30 seconds or so. Be careful not to burn the garlic.



Add your barley, just as you would your risotto rice, give everything a good stir to mix up those flavours and slowly add the stock, stirring frequently. The idea is to add the stock a little at a time, stirring loads to give the barley a chance to absorb the stock. In total this will take about 25-30 minutes, just until the barley is tender. If the barley is still too crunchy, add more stock and cook a little longer.

Once things are gorgeously soft and indulgent and the stock has been absorbed, stir in the asparagus to soften a little, and add the mushrooms back to the mix. Season well and cook until you are happy with the asparagus. We like it to still have a bit of crunch.

That's it, simple huh?

The cheese is a genius addition as it adds that creaminess that you would normally get from the starch in the rice but if you don't want to add it then this would still be a tasty dish.

