

Escarole and Smoked Mozzarella Risotto

1 small onion	6½ to 7 cups chicken stock
1 shallot	1 bay leaf
1 bunch scallions	6 sprigs thyme
1 garlic clove	⅓ pound smoked mozzarella
3 cups shredded escarole	½ cup grated Parmigiano
¼ cup virgin olive oil	2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2½ cups Arborio or Carnaroli rice	2 tablespoons virgin olive oil
½ cup dry white wine	
Salt and pepper to taste	

Mince the onion, shallot, and the white and pale green parts of the scallions. Snip the dark green stems of the scallions in small pieces and reserve.

Wash the escarole in several changes of water, making sure that all the sand is removed. Finely shred the escarole with a sharp knife. Bring a large kettle of salted water to boil, and blanch the escarole for about 3 minutes, until wilted slightly. Drain the escarole in a colander and refresh with cold water. Take handfuls of the cooked escarole and squeeze out as much water as possible. Then separate the escarole so that it's not all in a clump. Salt and pepper it to taste.

Finely dice the smoked mozzarella, and set aside. Bring the chicken stock, the bay leaf and the thyme sprigs to the simmer in a pot, and keep it at a very low simmer.

In a heavy Dutch oven, heat the ¼ cup of olive oil. Cook the onion, shallot, and chopped whites of scallion, over medium heat for about 7-8 minutes without browning, stirring frequently. Add the garlic after 5 minutes. If at any point the garlic clove begins to brown, discard it. You want only a slight flavor of garlic.

Add the rice to the pot, stirring for about 1-2 minutes, until the rice is coated with oil and is beginning to turn translucent. Pour in the wine, and cook until it is evaporated.

Add ½ cup of the simmering stock as well as salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring constantly, until the stock is evaporated. Then continue to add ½ cup of stock, stirring until it is absorbed before adding another ½ cup. If the rice is sticking to the bottom of the pan, immediately add another ½ cup of stock. Continue adding stock until you have only ½ cup of stock left. Discard the garlic clove. Stir in the escarole and snipped scallion stems.

By now, after 20-25 minutes of the cooking, the rice should be tender. Add the diced mozzarella, stirring until it is just melted. If you cook it too long the cheese will become stringy. Add the final ½ cup of stock, and remove from the heat. Off the heat, add in the 2 extra tablespoons of butter and olive oil, and stir in the Parmigiano.

Serve immediately, topping each serving with additional Parmigiano.