

Veal Parmagiana with Vegetable Risotto

Oh lord! This is probably my all time favourite meal. Big call, as I have many but this would have to be my ultimate comfort food. This is a "I am really full but I am going to eat all the kids leftovers and lick the plates clean as well" kinda meal! Meaty, tomatoey, cheesy, sticky ricey.....Damn well tasty!

Serves 4

You will need:

Olive oil for frying

1 large eggplant cut into thick slices and brushed with olive oil on both sides

4 veal leg steaks, bashed with a meat tenderiser

1 egg, lightly beaten

flour for dusting

1 cup of bread crumbs

2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

1 tsp dried oregano

2/3 cup of dry white wine

1 bottle tomato passata

1 tsp sugar

1 tbs tomato paste

Sea salt and cracked black pepper

1 cup of grated parmesan cheese

1 large ball of buffalo mozzarella

For the Risotto:

2 tbs olive oil

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

1 leek, washed and sliced (white part only)

2 sticks of celery, finely chopped

1 baby fennel, finely chopped

1 zucchini, halved and sliced

1/2 a cup of frozen baby peas

1 cup of arborio rice

1/2 a cup of dry white wine

2 1/2 cups of chicken or vegetable stock, warmed

1/2 a cup of grated parmesan

2 tbs chopped parsley

Sea salt and pepper

20 grams of unsalted butter

Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

To make the Parmagiana, coat the veal pieces lightly in flour, dip in the egg and press into the breadcrumbs so that you have a nice even coating all over,

pop it in the fridge for 1/2 an hour. Place the brushed slices of eggplant on a a baking tray in a single layer, season with salt and pepper and bake in a preheated 180 degree oven for 15 minutes or until nice and golden.

Heat the oil (enough to cover the base of the pan) in a heavy based fry pan.

To test wether the oil is hot enough throw in a couple of bread crumbs, if they bubble straight away, the oil is hot enough. Fry the veal on both sides (you may need to do it two at a time) until golden brown, remove from the pan and drain on paper towel to remove any excess oil.

In the same pan, drain off all but approx 2 tbs of the oil and lightly fry the garlic. Add the oregano and white wine and allow to reduce slightly before pouring in the passata. Bring to the boil and add the sugar, tomato paste and season with salt and pepper, lower the heat and simmer for approx 5 minutes.

Place the veal in a single layer in the tomato sauce. Top each piece with 2 slices of eggplant and sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Tear the buffalo mozzarella with your hands and drape over the top of each piece of veal. Pop the lid on the frypan and allow the cheese to melt for approx 5 minutes before placing under a preheated grill until golden brown and bubbling. If you have a pan that doesn't have an ovenproof handle just cover it with some foil before grilling.

To make the risotto, heat the oil in a large saucepan and fry the garlic and leek until nice and soft. Add the celery and fennel and fry for a further 5 minutes before pouring in the rice. Stirring continuously, fry the rice for approx 2 minutes until it is nicely coated with the oil and pour in the wine and 1/2 a cup of the stock. Stirring quite frequently, allow the rice to absorb the stock before adding more. Repeat this process for approx 10 minutes until all the liquid is gone and the rice is cooked but firm. If you need to you can add a little water.

Continuing to stir, add the zucchini and baby peas until just tender and heated through. To finish the dish, stir in the parsley, parmesan and butter and season with salt and pepper. Your risotto should be lovely, buttery and moist and will be the perfect accompaniment to the molten lusciousness of the Veal Parmagiana.