



(Almost) Hands-Free Butternut Squash Risotto

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** 13 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

stir: to mix together two or more ingredients with a spoon or spatula, usually in a circle pattern, or figure eight, or in whatever direction you like!

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

melt: to heat a solid food so it becomes liquid, like butter or chocolate.

mince: to chop into teeny tiny pieces.

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

brown: to cook food until it turns brown, crisper, and more flavorful from the heat of an oven, a pan, or the oil it is cooked in.

Equipment

- Skillet
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Dry measuring cups
- Wooden spoon
- Measuring spoons
- Liquid measuring cup

Ingredients

(Almost) Hands-Free Butternut Squash Risotto

- 1 C frozen and thawed butternut squash
- 2 T olive oil + more for browning squash
- 2 green onions
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3 T butter ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 3 T dairy-free/nut-free butter)******
- 2 C uncooked instant brown rice
- 1 14-oz can vegetable broth OR 1 vegetable bullion cube ****** + 1 3/4 C water
- 1/2 tsp vinegar
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1/8 tsp salt + more as needed
- 1/8 tsp ground black pepper + more as needed
- 1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese, divided ******(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub 1/2 C dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan cheese)******

Food Allergen Substitutions

(Almost) Hands-Free Butternut Squash Risotto

Dairy: For 3 T butter, substitute 3 T dairy-free/nut-free butter. For 1/2 C freshly grated Parmesan cheese, omit or substitute 1/2 C dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan cheese.

Celiac/Gluten/Soy: Check vegetable broth or bouillon labels for possible allergens and, if necessary, use water only.

Instructions

(Almost) Hands-Free Butternut Squash Risotto

chop + brown

Have your kids chop **1 cup of frozen and thawed butternut squash**. Add some olive oil to a skillet on your stovetop and brown the squash until soft. Transfer it to a bowl and set it aside. (If you are also making the **Best Butternut Salad**, brown an additional **1/2 to 1 cup of butternut squash** and set it aside when finished.)

mince + melt + sauté

Have your kids mince **2 green onions** and **2 garlic cloves** into little bits. Add **3 tablespoons butter** and **2 tablespoons olive oil** to a skillet on your stovetop over medium heat until the butter is melted. Add the chopped green onions and garlic and sauté for about 2 to 3 minutes, but don't brown! Turn off the heat on your skillet.

measure + stir

Have your kids measure and add **2 cups of uncooked instant brown rice** to the skillet and stir to coat with the butter, oil, garlic, and green onions. Then add **1 can vegetable broth OR 1 vegetable bouillon cube** plus **1 3/4 cups water**, **1/2 teaspoon vinegar**, **1 tsp cornstarch**, and **1 cup of the browned butternut squash**.

simmer + count

Turn your heat back on to medium and bring the rice mixture to a boil. Then, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes until the rice is tender. While the rice simmers, count to 10 in Italian with your kids: 1 uno (OO-noh), 2 due (DOO-eh), 3 tre (treh), 4 quattro (KWAHT-troh), 5 cinque (CHEEN-kweh), 6 sei (SEH-ee), 7 sette (SET-teh), 8 otto (OHT-toh), 9 nove (NOH-veh), 10 dieci (dee-EH-chee).

stir + top

Mix in **1/4 cup of grated Parmesan cheese** and **salt and black pepper** to taste. Top each serving with a sprinkle of the remaining **1/4 cup of Parmesan cheese!** "Buon appetito" (Bwohn ap-peh-TEE-toe) or "Enjoy your meal" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Butternut Squash!

Hi! I'm Butternut Squash!

"I've got a long neck with a rather bulbous end—like a bell or bottle! I'm related to the pumpkin, and in Australia, they call me a butternut pumpkin!"

History & Etymology

Squash are one of the oldest known crops—10,000 years by some estimates of sites in Mexico. All squash is native to North America, but the butternut variety didn't exist until the 1940s, when Charles Leggett, a Massachusetts man, crossed a pumpkin with a gooseneck squash.

"Squash" comes from the mid-17th century Narragansett word "askutasquash"), which means "eaten raw or uncooked." This squash is called "butternut" because of its nutty flavor.

Anatomy

Botanically, butternut squash is a fruit and belongs to the Cucurbitaceae family that includes cucumbers, honeydew melons, pumpkins, watermelons, and zucchini. However, as food, it is used as a vegetable. Butternut squash is a type of winter squash that grows on a vine, and when ready for harvest, they have a hard tan skin that you can't pierce with a fingernail, yellow-orange flesh that gets more orange when ripe, and a hollow seed cavity with edible seeds.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Winter squash are cured for the best flavor, as their natural sugars have a chance to concentrate. They are picked with part of their stem left on, then left in the sun, and kept dry for about 7 to 14 days. (Although, they can also be cured indoors.) Their skin hardens as they sit, allowing them to last longer in storage. Butternut squash is seasonal, and in the US, the best time to buy ripe local squash is September through October.

Look for butternut squash with a solid beige color without deep cuts or bruises. A little surface scratching and marks from where it sat on the ground are acceptable. Select one that feels heavy for its size and leave any with brown spots or punctures, as bacteria and mold could develop.

Store butternut squash in a cool, dark place in your kitchen, and it will keep for 2 to 3 months—it does not need to be refrigerated.

Its unique flavor can be used in both savory and sweet dishes. You can cook it in various ways: roasted, grilled, steamed, or puréed. It is a side dish or an ingredient for soup, pasta, dips, salads, desserts, and more.

In South Africa, cooks use butternut squash to make soup, or they grill it whole, seasoned with cinnamon and nutmeg or stuffed with spinach and feta and wrapped in foil.

The skin is edible if softened during roasting. Roasted butternut squash seeds can be eaten as a nutritious snack, just like pumpkin seeds, or their oil can be pressed for cooking or salad dressings.

Nutrition

Butternut squash is a good source of soluble fiber, beta-carotene, vitamins A, C, and E, manganese, magnesium, and potassium. It has more vitamin A than that of a pumpkin. It is high in water content and very low in calories: one serving is just 45 calories!

Butternut squash has natural antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties and is good for your skin and eyesight.