



## **Butternut Squash Risotto with Crispy Parma Ham & Toasted Walnuts**

**Serves 6 as a Starter (4 as a Main)**

### **Ingredients**

100ml olive oil  
2 shallots, peeled and finely chopped  
300 Arborio Rice  
1 litre of chicken or vegetable stock  
6tbs Parmesan, freshly grated  
3tbs mascarpone  
Butternut squash puree\* – from 8tbs but more if you want  
70gm butter, cut into small cubes  
Seasoning to taste

### **Method**

Heat the olive oil in a large pan and sweat the shallots for about 5 minutes, be sure to stir them regularly so they don't colour. Add the rice and cook, stirring for a minute or two. Pour in a ladle or two of stock and let it simmer slowly stirring occasionally until almost all absorbed – then add a little more until all the stock is used up. Don't rush ... the process should take about 16/18 minutes. You can test the rice to make sure its al dente. Stir in the Parmesan, mascarpone and squash puree then add the butter cubes and season to taste.

### **Butternut Squash Puree**

Peel and dice a whole butternut squash. Melt 150gms butter (you can use less if you are very conscious about calories!) in a pan and add the squash. Cook without colouring for at least 15 mins over a medium heat until the squash is very soft. Cool a little then whiz in a blender until smooth. Scrape the seeds from a vanilla pod and stir into the puree with lots of salt and pepper. This is a lovely dish to serve with a roast and freezes well. You can add as much as you like to your risotto.

To make your dish extra special you can add some toasted or roasted walnuts and some Parma ham that's been roasted in the oven until crisp – adding a few chilli flakes also gives an extra kick. You could also top with some roasted, diced butternut squash for extra texture and colour!

This recipe is so versatile and will wow your family and guests!