

BRYANNA'S INSALATA DI RISO (PIEDMONTESE RICE SALAD)

Serves 4-6

From my book "[Nonna's Italian Kitchen](#)".

This salad makes a wonderful late spring or summer luncheon dish, or can be the star attraction at a buffet or potluck.

Rice:

1/2 c. light vegetarian broth (or use 2 1/2 c. water with broth cube or cubes meant for 2 c. liquid)

1 1/2 c. basmati or converted rice

Roasted Garlic Dressing:

1 large head roasted garlic, squeezed out of peels (I roast it in my countertop oven at 400 degrees for about 1/2 an hour, the top sliced open a bit and wrapped in foil.)

1/2 c. chickpea cooking broth (now known as aquafaba) or other vegetarian broth

1/4 c. extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 c. cider vinegar

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. freshly-ground pepper

Vegetables and Herbs:

1/2 lb. fresh asparagus, cut into 1" pieces OR 1 c. shelled fresh or thawed frozen petit pois (baby peas)

4 green onions, trimmed and chopped

1 small jar (7 oz.) marinated artichoke hearts, rinsed and sliced

2 roasted red peppers, chopped, or equivalent from a jar of roasted peppers, rinsed

(NOTE: if you have no red peppers, use a chopped green pepper and about 6 sundried tomatoes in oil, sliced)

2 stalks celery OR fennel, chopped

1/2 c. sliced pimento-stuffed green olives

2 T. chopped Italian parsley or regular parsley

2 T. chopped fresh basil OR 2 tsp. dried

Optional Topping:

1/4 c. toasted pine nuts or slivered almonds

To cook the rice, bring the broth or water and broth cubes to a boil in a medium saucepan with a tight lid. Slowly add the rice in a stream, bring back to a boil, cover and lower the heat to almost the lowest heat. Cook 15 minutes for white rice, 30-45 minutes for brown rice. Fluff with a fork and let sit a few more minutes before scraping into a large salad bowl.

Meanwhile, steam the asparagus until crisp-tender, and rinse under cold running water to stop cooking. Drain very well. Prepare the other vegetables and herbs.

Blend the dressing ingredients together in a blender or mini-chopper until smooth. Toss with the warm rice and add the asparagus and remaining vegetables and herbs. Cover and refrigerate. Serve at room temperature, if possible, with the nuts sprinkled on top.