



SERVES 4

Barley risotto with marinated feta

200g pearl barley
30g unsalted butter
90ml olive oil
2 small celery stalks, cut into 5mm dice
2 small shallots, cut into 5mm dice
4 garlic cloves, cut into 2mm dice
4 thyme sprigs
1/2 tsp smoked paprika
1 bay leaf
4 strips of lemon rind
1/4 tsp chilli flakes
400g tin chopped tomatoes
700ml vegetable stock
300ml passata
1 tbsp caraway seeds
300g feta, broken roughly into 2cm pieces
1 tbsp fresh oregano leaves
salt

This vegetarian main course is a dish everybody loves, particularly children. Unlike the proper Italian risotto, ours does not require the exact precision and meticulous preparation, but still tastes sensational.

Rinse the pearl barley well under cold water and leave to drain. Melt the butter and 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a very large frying pan and cook the celery, shallot and garlic on a gentle heat for 5 minutes or until soft. Add the barley, thyme, paprika, bay leaf, lemon rind, chilli flakes, tomatoes, stock, passata and 1/2 a tablespoon of salt. Stir to combine. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce to a very gentle simmer and cook for 45 minutes, stirring frequently to make sure the risotto does not catch on the bottom of the pan. When ready, the barley should be tender and most of the liquid absorbed.

Meanwhile, toast the caraway seeds in a dry pan for a couple of minutes. Then lightly crush them so that some whole seeds remain. Add them to the feta with the remaining olive oil and gently mix to combine.

Once the risotto is ready, check the seasoning and then divide it between four shallow bowls. Top each with the marinated feta, including the oil, and a sprinkling of oregano leaves.

