

# Good Enough 2 Eat

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## Carrot and Pumpkin Risotto with a hint of Saffron

Once you have mastered the basic method of cooking risotto, flavourings and additional ingredients are just a matter of taste. Extra ingredients can be added at the beginning of the cooking cycle, or cooked separately and folded into the rice just a few minutes before serving. Cooking risotto is labour intensive. Don't think you can start the process; watch a segment of your favourite television program and return to finish it a few minutes later. Risotto demands your undivided attention. Stir the rice continually and consistently adding one ladle of stock at a time, watch it absorb and repeat the cycle until the rice is slightly loose, creamy and smooth.

### You'll need:

90g Butter  
1 Onion finely, chopped  
250g Pumpkin, diced  
2 carrots, diced  
8 cups of stock  
2 cups of risotto (Arborio) rice  
Large pinch of saffron threads

### Here's what to do:

Heat 60g of the butter in a large heavy based pan. Add the onion and fry for one or two minutes until transparent. Add the pumpkin and carrots and cook for 10 minutes until tender. Add the saffron to the stock and then heat and keep at the simmering point. Add the rice to the vegetables and cook for about a minute stirring continually until the grains are translucent. Stir in a ladleful of the simmering stock and cook, stirring all of the time until the liquid is absorbed. Stir in another ladle of stock and repeat the process for about 20 minutes, until the rice is *al dente* and won't absorb any more stock. The rice should be tender and creamy. You might find that you don't need to use all of the stock, or that you might have to make a little extra. Every risotto is different. When ready, remove from the heat; add the remaining butter, perhaps top with some cheese (such as shaved Romano or Parmesan) and a sprinkle of freshly chopped parsley. This is comfort food at its best – Good enough to eat!

**Saffron** has been a prized ingredient since the beginning of time. Even today its use in food is seen as an extravagance of wealth and decadence. Who would have thought that the fragile stigmas of a flower from the crocus family could have such effect? I'm told that saffron is the world's most expensive spice compared in weight to gold. This expense is due to its intensive growing and harvesting process. The stigmas have to be hand harvested immediately upon flowering then dried. It takes approximately seventy thousand flowers to obtain half a kilogram of saffron. Thankfully, only a small amount is needed in cooking, which makes it quite accessible to commoners like me.