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Risotto ai Porcini

I always remember a formative experience on my first trip to a Tuscan market in Figlioli Valdarno. An old boy in a big overcoat (on a fine Summer's day) was loitering about with a hessian sack at his feet. My curiosity was satisfied when a shopper walked up and the man pulled out an ancient pair of iron scales from his overcoat and proceeded to carefully weigh a fresh bambi skinned porcini from his sack! We are lucky enough to have a regular supply of fresh and dried funghi porcini from Gabriella Ruggero in Tuscany who forages up in the hills of San Pellegrino in Alpe in Garafagnana. This is her recipe.

1/2 medium white onion, thinly sliced
parsley, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

300 g fresh porcini, cut into pieces (not too large)

300 g risotto rice

1 litre well-seasoned meat stock

extra virgin olive oil

salt & pepper to taste

Soak the porcini in hot but not boiling water for at least half an hour to get the stock and rehydrate the porcini.

Heat extra virgin olive oil in a wide pan. Add onion and sauté until soft.

Add parsley and garlic and stir for a minute. Add porcini and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile bring stock to a

boil and keep at a simmer. Stir in rice until totally coated. Add enough stock to cover rice, stir and simmer until most of the stock is absorbed.

Continue to add more stock as each previous addition is absorbed until the rice is al dente (about 15–20 minutes).

Serves 6.

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