

# Summer Squash and Squash Blossom Risotto

SERVES 4

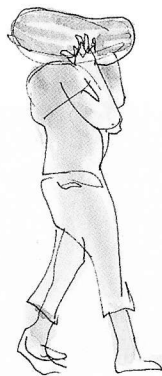
This risotto is a sunny, golden dish that uses masses of squash blossoms, golden squash, and yellow tomatoes. A number of different yellow tomatoes come to market, from the deep orange Sun Gold cherry tomatoes and the yellow-orange Italian paste tomatoes to Italian Golds and lemon-colored fruits. My choice would be the yellow-gold paste types or any thick-walled tomatoes, but try whatever is available to you.

## THE TOMATOES

- 1 pound or more ripe yellow tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped marjoram
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- sea salt

## THE RICE

- 1 pound bright yellow zucchini
  - 5 to 6 cups Vegetable Stock, page 385
  - 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
  - 1/3 cup finely diced shallots
  - 1 1/2 cups Arborio rice
  - 1/2 cup white wine
  - 1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
  - 20 to 30 squash blossoms, slivered
  - sea salt and freshly ground pepper
1. Cut the tomato walls (sides) into small neat pieces and finely mince the cores. Put them in a bowl with the garlic, herbs, oil, and a few pinches of salt and set aside. Cut the zucchini into small dice, about twice as large as the grains of rice. Have the stock simmering on the stove.
  2. Melt the butter in a wide pot. Add the shallots and squash and cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the squash has begun to color, about 15 minutes.
  3. Add the rice and stir to coat it with the butter. Pour in the wine and simmer until it's absorbed, then add 1/2 cup stock and simmer until it's absorbed. Keep adding stock in 1/2-cup increments until the rice is cooked, using 5 to 6 cups in all. Turn off the heat and stir in the tomatoes and cheese. Stir in the squash blossoms, taste for salt, and season with pepper.



# Chard and Cilantro Soup with Noodle Nests | SERVES 4 TO 6

Cool-weather markets can count on a steady supply of chard and cilantro, which get together in this pretty soup. Diana Kennedy is responsible for the noodle nests—I never would have come up with them myself—but they're a great addition, giving texture and substance to a light soup. Consider using them in place of dumplings and croutons in other brothy soups.

## THE NOODLE NESTS

2 eggs, separated  
3 ounces (1¾ cups) fine egg noodles  
such as fideos or capellini,  
uncooked  
⅓ cup grated Monterey Jack cheese  
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro  
sea salt  
peanut oil for frying

1. Beat the egg whites until they hold firm peaks, then stir in the yolks, noodles, cheese, and cilantro. Season with a few pinches of salt, then really work the mixture with your hands or a wooden spoon so that it's more or less homogenous. It will look impossibly dry and stiff.
2. Heat enough oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat to float the noodles, at least ⅓ inch. When it's hot, drop the batter into the oil, dividing it into 4 or 6 portions by eye. Fry until golden, about 1 minute, then turn and fry the second side, another minute. Set aside on paper towels. These can be made hours ahead of time.

## THE SOUP

1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 bunches scallions, including an inch or  
2 of the greens, finely chopped  
1 celery rib, diced  
1 cup finely chopped cilantro stems  
and leaves, packed  
leaves from 1 bunch chard, green or  
Rainbow (Bright Lights), about  
6 cups, packed  
sea salt and freshly ground pepper  
6 cups Vegetable Stock, page 385,  
chicken stock, or water  
cilantro sprigs for garnish

1. Warm the oil in a soup pot. Add the scallions and celery and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. After a few minutes, add the cilantro and ½ cup water so that the vegetables stew rather than fry. Add the chard leaves, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt, then cover and cook until the chard has wilted down. Add the stock or water.
2. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and add the noodle nests to the pot. Simmer until the chard is tender, about 10 minutes. Taste for salt and season with pepper. Ladle the soup into soup plates, include a noodle nest in each bowl, and serve garnished with a sprig of cilantro.