

# Winter Squash Risotto with Seared Radicchio

| SERVES 4

Blue Hubbard squash is rich and meaty. It's one you'll do well with here, but also consider Buttercup, Hokkaido, Queensland Blue, and any other smallish squat green-skinned varieties. Many of these heirloom varieties have dense, dark yellow flesh with deep flavor and creamy texture. Butternut, as always, works well, too. In any case, you need only a cup of cooked squash to season this risotto. (To bake winter squash, see page 151.)

Pumpkin seed oil—certainly optional if you can't find it—is dark green and redolent of pumpkin, an appropriate and beautiful garnish that picks up the flavor of the squash.

6 cups Vegetable Stock, page 385, or  
chicken stock  
1 cup cooked winter squash  
1 head radicchio, cut into wedges 1 to  
2 inches wide  
olive oil  
sea salt and freshly ground pepper  
balsamic vinegar  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 yellow onion, finely diced  
1½ cups Arborio rice  
1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-  
Reggiano  
2 teaspoons pumpkin seed oil,  
if available

1. If you're making a vegetable stock, begin it first. Be sure to use any seeds from the winter squash.
2. Mash the cooked squash with a fork to smooth the flesh. Brush the radicchio generously with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Heat a skillet, add the radicchio, and cook on both sides until wilted and brown, about 5 minutes per side. Douse lightly with the vinegar, then transfer to a cutting board and chop coarsely.
3. When you're ready to begin cooking the risotto, have the stock simmering on a burner. Melt the butter in a wide soup pot. Add the onion and cook over medium heat until wilted and lightly colored but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add the rice, stir to coat, and cook for 1 minute. Turn the heat to high, add 2 cups of the simmering stock, and cook at a lively boil, stirring just a few times. When the first batch is fully absorbed, begin adding stock ½ cup at a time, stirring constantly. Once you've used 4 cups in all, stir the squash into the rice. Continue cooking, stirring, and adding liquid until the rice is tender, but still a little resistant, and the sauce is creamy.
4. When the rice is done, add the radicchio. Cook for a minute more to heat the radicchio, then turn off the heat and stir in the cheese. Taste for salt, season with pepper, and divide among heated plates. Season with pepper and drizzle a little of the dark-green pumpkin oil into each dish.