

High Merit

Please note – These are extracts from one student’s response

Risotto is a sophisticated staple food from Italy. Rice has been grown in Italy for hundreds of years and is commonly known as a simple food. Different Italians have a different take on how they find a perfect risotto as some like it soft and creamy or soupy with a slight crunch. Although risotto is known as a simple food, the Italians have a great passion for cooking so they use a fresh stock with fresh ingredients bought from local stores that sell fresh produce. The process that Italians use to cook an authentic risotto is very delicate to create the perfect flavour, texture and quantity. Although it is a simple dish, the Italians spend time to get it just right.

Before the 1970s people living in New Zealand typically ate a roast dinner, casserole or stew which needed time to cook. This is because people had more time at home with a lot of women being full-time Mum’s at home so they could put a roast or casserole on in the afternoon. Usually people would grow their own vegetables in their garden which allowed access to fresh, in season vegetables. Now people buy most of their ingredients from a supermarket and buying convenience foods in packets is popular with only a few steps to cook or reheat them, for example – packaged rice risotto with all the ingredients included, premade stock, in packets, pouches or bowls only requiring water and heating to prepare them. This has changed as post 1970 women are now busy working outside of the home and have little time to cook during the week. The convenience of these readymade meals allows for a quick meal to be produced in no time when they get home tired and the family is hungry and waiting to have dinner.

1

Italian risotto has developed all over the world. Risotto is now served in restaurants across New Zealand with their own take on an authentic recipe. When Italians migrated to New Zealand in the 1900s, they settled and built their own business sharing authentic risotto. This risotto has been altered by New Zealanders who have changed and added little things to the recipe to make it their own such as including meat such as chicken in with the rice. This is because New Zealanders are big meat eaters – we produce lots of meat in New Zealand and most would not think a bowl of rice and vegetables was sufficient for a meal.

2

My personal knowledge of an authentic risotto leads me to believe you need a certain amount of passion and dedication to be able to create the perfect risotto. The cooking of a perfect risotto takes time and Italians spend quite a bit of time cooking a perfect risotto. New Zealanders do not tend to have lots of time as often both parents work and prefer quick ‘15 minute’ meals which often means using some processed packaged foods.

3

The passion the Italians brought with them to New Zealand is now slowly disappearing as people don’t have the time or the dedication to create an authentic risotto from scratch. Rice is imported from Asia and Italy because the conditions are not optimum for the rice to grow in New Zealand. Risotto has been altered from having simple fresh ingredients to being bought from the store and big hearty ingredients which New Zealand is known for.

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