

High Achieved

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

Rice risotto is a traditional Italian dish. It is more of a Northern Italian cuisine as in the north they are able to grow lots of rice which is an essential part of rice risotto. Risotto is a rice, vegetable and cheese dish where you cook the rice by adding ladle after ladle of a (chicken) stock. This means that there always has to be someone nearby checking on the risotto so it can become very time consuming. Traditional risotto does not contain meat as Italians eat their meat in a separate course.

While in New Zealand we add meats like chicken, bacon or ham to make it into a whole meal for the family. Risotto is a filling dish and is usually eaten at lunch time in Italy as a replacement of a pasta or pizza dish while in New Zealand we would serve it as a complete evening family meal... 1

When Italians started migrating to New Zealand in 1900s onwards, they did really well in the market gardens throughout the Hutt Valley and Levin. These market gardens supplied local Italians with the right traditional food to produce quality Italian cuisine.

Many people after trying the risotto in restaurants or reading about in cookbooks attempted to make their own risotto. 2

Also the Diamond Pasta Company started to make a product that looked like risotto but contained rice shaped pasta along with some rice and flavourings. It is still available today at the supermarket. 3

Another problem was that making a chicken stock from scratch was time consuming and for a working family it was not always an ideal choice for dinner. Also the Italians like to keep their dishes simple and only use the freshest ingredients. Not all New Zealanders had the freshest ingredients like spinach, mushrooms or fresh herbs so they began to adapt and change recipes. 4

Risotto in New Zealand only became popular since 1990s so it is a reasonably new dish. This is because more and more people started to travel and came back to New Zealand with new ideas and dishes to try out. 5

Another factor is that you can buy premade stock and people use these when making risotto at home which makes preparing risotto less time consuming and a quick easy snack with the invention of microwaves. 6

Also came the invention of packaged rice risotto which is risotto with everything premade and cooked in the packet or pouch and all that needs to be done is to heat it in the microwave. This is why rice risotto is becoming more and more popular as it is so much quicker and easier to make. 7

Also there are now many varieties of pre-made risotto so people can pick and choose whatever vegetables, meats etc they want in their dishes. Compared to the traditional Italian method, Uncle Bens (one of the many producers of a packaged risotto) has created a nutritious and quick meal for families/people on the go. 8