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2014 No16

### **Asparagus and whistling green pea risotto.**

**The Market Garden** now has English asparagus, and peas in the pod. I bought peas last week to make this recipe but ate them all raw before I got round to it. My grandmother used to make us whistle while we were shelling peas, so I did that ... and, finally, here you are.

#### **Ingredients:**

1 large onion

4 sticks of celery

4 garlic cloves

1 litre of hot stock (I like to use veggie stock, but you can use chicken) – keep this by the stove in a jug, or in a pan on a low heat.

1 bunch of asparagus. Trim off and discard the very woody bit at the thick end – about 1 cm is enough. Cut the asparagus stalks in half.

2 big handfuls of peas in the pod – shell the peas while whistling.

Don't stop whistling until you have added them to the risotto

400 g risotto rice

a glass of white wine

100 g grana padano or parmesan cheese. Grana padano is less salty and a little creamier. You can get these in **James Elliott**.

A knob of butter.

salt and pepper

#### **What to do. ...roughly speaking:**

Chop the onion, celery, garlic and the thicker halves of the asparagus very finely.

Heat a little olive oil in a large saucepan until smoking, and add the chopped veg. Stir it all around quickly for a few seconds and then turn down the heat, put a lid on the pan and sweat the veg for about 5 minutes. Take off the lid, turn up the heat a bit and add the rice. Keep stirring. Add the wine. Keep stirring. When the rice has absorbed the wine, start to add the stock – a little (about 100 ml) at a time. Wait until the rice has absorbed the liquid before you add any more. Taste the rice from time to time to see how you're doing.

When the rice is almost cooked (after about 20 minutes), cut the tender ends of the asparagus in half and add these and the raw green peas. Keep cooking until the rice is cooked (when it's no longer gritty in the middle, it's done). You may not need all the stock. Or you may need a little more.. The asparagus tips and peas should still be slightly crunchy. Turn off the heat and add the butter and most of the grated cheese - mix it all around thoroughly. Taste it and add salt and pepper if you like.

Serve immediately with a crunchy green salad.

### About Kay's Essex Road Recipes.

I improvise recipes based on what looks good in my wonderful and entertaining local shops; **Steve Hatt** the fishmonger, **The Market Garden** greengrocers, **James Elliott** the butcher and **Raab's** Bakery. Throughout 2014 I plan to share about recipe a week. Once you get the hang of it, you can start to improvise your own menus. These recipe cards only available on paper in the shops. We do have a Facebook page to update you with what's new <https://www.facebook.com/essexroadrecipes?fref=ts>. At the end of the year you'll be able to order a special edition full set of about 50 recipes online, so check in to the FB page for more information.

All recipes are for about 4 people. They're not written for complete beginners; I'm assuming that you know a little bit about cooking so I've been approximate and poetic with measurements, times, weights and instructions. I hope you get the idea, and go on to improvise your own Essex Road recipes.

Most of the other ingredients, including spices and oils, are available from the convenience stores between the New Rose and Raab's. Pasta, risotto rice and really good oils and wines are to be found in **Saponara** on Prebend Street which also serves the best fresh pasta and pizza in the neighbourhood.

**If you have any suggestions or comments I'd love to hear them. You can leave them on the facebook page (Kay's Essex Road Recipes) or, in the spirit of the thing, write me a note and leave it in one of the shops. Kay**