

Roasted Monkfish with Asparagus Risotto and Lemon Thyme Butter

This is one of a handful of dishes that we love to return to as soon as the asparagus season gets underway. It's adapted from a Tom Oldroyd recipe taken from a Waitrose magazine back in 2016. You could easily substitute salmon, cod or halibut for the monkfish, just make sure that everyone gets a decent chunk of really top quality fish.

DETAILS

- **Prep time:** 20-25 minutes
- **Cook time:** 25 minutes
- **Total time:** 50 minutes
- **Serves:** 4

INGREDIENTS

- 8-10 asparagus spears
- 800ml of fresh vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- 25ml olive oil
- 25g unsalted butter
- 250g Carnaroli or Arborio rice
- 125ml dry white wine (or vermouth)
- 4 x 150g monkfish fillets (or an alternative fish)
- 30g grated parmesan

For the lemon thyme butter

- 100g salted butter, softened
- small handful of lemon thyme (leaves only)
- small clove of garlic, crushed
- Zest of one lemon

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4. For the lemon thyme butter, thoroughly mix all the ingredients together in a bowl then scoop out onto cling film, roll into a log and chill.

Cut the tips (4-5cm) off the asparagus and slice the middle section into 2mm wide disks, set both aside. Put the bottom woody pieces into a pan with the stock and bring up to the boil before turning down to a low heat to keep warm.

In a wide, heavy-based pan, sweat the shallots in the oil and butter until they begin to soften. Add the rice and continue to stir for a couple of minutes. Turn up the heat and add the wine. Once all of the liquid has evaporated, turn the heat down and start adding the stock, a ladleful at a time, making sure all of the liquid has been soaked up by the rice before you add the next ladleful. After about 10 minutes add the asparagus tips and slices.

Keep adding the stock until the rice is cooked but still retains a slight bite, this should take 15-20 minutes.

Meanwhile, season the monkfish fillets and put them on a baking tray. Bake for 12-15 minutes, placing a few slices of the lemon thyme butter on top of each piece of fish three minutes before the end of cooking.

When the risotto is cooked remove it from the heat, season well and stir in the parmesan and the remaining lemon thyme butter. Cover and rest for a few minutes. Give the risotto a final stir and divide between four plates. Top each pile of risotto with a piece of monkfish, pour over the buttery cooking juices and finish with a scattering of parmesan.