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Risotto di Salsiccia e Borlotti

Risotto with sausage and borlotti has a beautiful creamy consistency with all the flavours of the fennel sausage.

- 450g fresh unshelled borlotti beans or 2/3 cup dried, soaked and boiled
- splash of extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 3 or 4 Squisito Tuscan red wine & fennel sausages
- 5 cups homemade meat broth or 1/2 cup canned beef consommé diluted with 4
- 1/2 cups of water
- 1 1/2 cups carnaroli, arborio or other imported Italian rice for risotto
- For mantecare:
 - 2 tbs butter
 - 1 cupped handful freshly grated Grana Padano cheese
 - finely chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley
 - salt
 - freshly ground black pepper

If using fresh beans, shell them, put them in a pot with enough cold, unsalted water to cover by about two inches, bring the water to a gentle simmer, cover the pot, and cook at a slow, steady pace until tender, about 45 minutes to one hour. Let them steep in their liquid until ready to use. If using dried beans, soak them overnight with a pinch of bicarbonate of soda for at least six hours, drain, then boil them in a fresh change of water with a carrot, celery stick and 1/2 an onion. Let them steep in their liquid until ready to use.

Put the oil and chopped onion in a medium skillet, turn on the heat to medium, and cook the onions, stirring frequently until translucent but not coloured. Add the crumbled sausage and cook it, turning it over with a wooden spoon, until it becomes coloured a rich brown all over.

Retrieve the cooked beans from their pot, using a colander spoon or another slotted spoon, and put them in the skillet. Add one or two tablespoons of water from the bean pot, and mash about half the beans, pressing them against the bottom of the skillet with the wooden spoon.

Cook for about a minute, turning the contents of the pot over with the spoon from time to time. Pour the broth into a saucepan, bringing it to the boil and keeping it at a slow, sputtering simmer.