

Risotto with Leeks and Speck

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A hearty (and one-pot) meal, this risotto shows off the lightly smoked flavor of Speck Alto Adige PGI, paired perfectly with delicately sweet leeks and creamy Asiago PDO cheese. Although they come from different regions, both Speck Alto Adige PGI and Asiago PDO are products of lush and mountainous environments.

[Speck Alto Adige PGI](#) [2] is made exclusively in the Alto Adige, where ham has been preserved for centuries in a unique style that blends the traditions of Mediterranean air-curing with the smoke-curing traditions of the Alps. Carefully selected pork legs are massaged with garlic, bay leaf, juniper, rosemary, sea salt, and other spices – each recipe is a carefully guarded secret for each producer – and are partially cured in cold smokers for at least a week.

Heading just a bit south of the Alps, in the lush fields of Trento and Veneto, cows graze openly on the Asiago plateau – and it's no wonder that their milk has been used for centuries to make flavorful and creamy cheeses. This recipe calls for Asiago Stagionato, or Aged Asiago, which is aged for at least four months and takes on an increasingly nutty, spicy flavor as it ages.



What better way to warm up this winter than with this Alpine-inspired dish?

Risotto ai Porri e Speck (Risotto with Leeks and Speck)

Recipe courtesy of [Uncommon Flavors of Europe](#) [3]

Yield: 4 servings

7 ounces of the light green part of several leeks
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
5 ounces Speck Alto Adige PGI, without the rind
2 tablespoons [extra virgin olive oil](#) [4]
1 cup [Arborio or Carnaroli rice](#) [5]
½ cup white wine
4 cups well-salted vegetable broth
¾ cup grated Aged Asiago PDO

Cut the dark, tough leaves off the tops of the leeks and discard. Reserve the light green portion of the leeks and cut off the bottom white portion (you can reserve this part for another use).

Quarter and wash the light green leek sections well. Blanch the leeks in rapidly boiling water for two minutes, until tender and bright green. Place in a colander and run under cold water to stop the cooking. Drain and wrap in several layers of paper towels. Squeeze out all the liquid, then chop finely with the butter. Set aside.

Cut the Speck Alto Adige PGI into ⅛-inch slices, then cut into matchstick pieces. Set aside.

Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the rice and cook, stirring constantly, for three to four minutes, until the grains become a bit opaque and toasted. Add the wine and simmer until the liquid evaporates, about 30 seconds.

Add one cup of the broth and allow to simmer, stirring often. Time the risotto from this point for a total cooking time of 18 minutes. As the rice absorbs the broth, ladle in about a half-cup of additional broth at a time. Continue to add broth a little at a time as the rice absorbs it, but be careful not to add too much broth at the end of the cooking – the rice should become naturally creamy, not swimming in broth or dry and sticky.

Stir in the leek/butter and the grated Asiago PDO to give the risotto a creamy and velvety consistency.

Serve immediately in warm shallow bowls. Garnish with the sliced Speck Alto Adige PGI on top of each serving.

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