

# Seafood Risotto with Shrimp, Mussels, and Squid

SERVES 8

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** This risotto is all about maximizing seafood flavor. We began by making a rich seafood broth: Browning shrimp shells in butter added a robust depth to start. We deglazed with wine, then added mussels to steam and contribute more seafood flavor to the broth. Fennel stalks added a licorice-y sweetness. With the broth done, we started on the risotto itself: we sweated onion, fennel, garlic, and tomato paste before stirring in squid and starchy arborio rice. We added wine and a large amount of the warm broth to jumpstart the rice. Adding the remaining broth little by little allowed us to control the finished texture of the rice. When the rice was almost perfectly cooked, we stirred in the raw shrimp, shelled mussels, fresh herbs, and butter. The residual heat was enough to just cook the shrimp through, finish the rice, and heat the mussels. Whole mussels in their shell, plus fresh fennel fronds and parsley, made a beautiful garnish to the finished seafood risotto.

- 1 (12-ounce) fennel bulb**
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided**
- 1 pound extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled, deveined, and cut into ¾-inch pieces, shells reserved**
- 2 cups dry white wine, divided**
- 2 pounds mussels, scrubbed and debearded**
- 7 cups water**
- 1 cup finely chopped onion**
- 3½ teaspoons table salt, divided**
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 3 garlic cloves, minced**
- 8 ounces squid, bodies sliced crosswise into ¼-inch-thick rings, tentacles cut in half**
- 2 cups arborio rice**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**
- Lemon wedges**

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** Arborio rice, which is high in starch, gives risotto its characteristic creaminess; do not substitute other types of rice. The final texture of this risotto should be slightly creamy, similar to loose oatmeal, but it will thicken as it sits. You may have leftover shellfish broth; this broth is flavorful and can be saved for use in other dishes.

**1.** Coarsely chop fennel stalks; core and finely chop fennel bulb (you should have about 1 cup); chop fennel fronds to yield ¼ cup; set aside.

**2.** Melt 4 tablespoons butter in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add reserved shrimp shells and cook, stirring often, until shells begin to turn spotty brown, about 3 minutes. Stir in fennel stalks, 1 cup wine, and mussels and bring to simmer. Cover saucepan and cook, stirring occasionally, until mussels open, about 5 minutes. Off heat, use tongs to transfer mussels to bowl (gathering any mussels that fall out of shells).



**3.** Add water to wine-shell mixture in saucepan and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Strain broth through fine-mesh strainer set over large bowl; discard solids. Return broth to saucepan, cover, and keep warm over low heat.

**4.** Meanwhile, shell all but 8 mussels; reserve shelled and unshelled mussels separately.

**5.** Melt 4 tablespoons butter in Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in fennel bulb, onion, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened but not browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and garlic and cook, uncovered, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add squid and cook, stirring often, until squid are opaque and fond just begins to form on bottom of pot, about 3 minutes.

**6.** Stir in rice and cook until edges of grains are translucent, about 2 minutes. Add remaining 1 cup wine and cook, stirring often and scraping up any browned bits, until wine is absorbed, about 2 minutes. Stir in 5 cups warm broth and remaining 2½ teaspoons salt and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring every 3 minutes, until broth is mostly absorbed and spoon leaves trail on bottom of pot that fills in slowly, 20 to 22 minutes.

**7.** Stir in 1 cup broth and continue to cook, stirring constantly, until rice is al dente, about 3 minutes longer. Cut remaining 4 tablespoons butter into 4 pieces, then stir butter, shrimp, shelled mussels, 2 tablespoons fennel fronds, and parsley into risotto. Cook, stirring constantly, until butter is incorporated, about 1 minute. Cover pot, remove from heat, and let sit until shrimp are cooked through, about 5 minutes.

**8.** Adjust consistency with up to 1 cup additional broth as needed, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup at a time, to achieve texture of loose oatmeal. Season with salt to taste. Gently press 8 unshelled mussels into top of risotto, hinge side down. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons fennel fronds. Serve with lemon wedges.