



## ***Risi e bisi***

### **Rice and Pea Soup**

*Excerpted from Cucina Povera by Giulia Scarpaleggia (Artisan Books). Copyright © 2023. Photographs by Tommaso Galli.*

*Makes one large loaf*

Risi e bisi, literally “rice and peas,” is one of the most representative dishes of Veneto and a perfect example of the nutritious and balanced marriage of carbs and vegetable protein. Use fresh organic peas in the pod for this dish if you can get them. Make a stock out of the pods, which will infuse the soup with an intense flavor. Then strain the stock and blend the pods into a puree, to add creaminess to the soup. Not precisely a soup or a risotto, risi e bisi should be soft but not too loose, creamy but not too

dense. For a quicker version, use 1½ cups/255 g shelled peas, either fresh or frozen, and 3 cups/720 ml vegetable stock (skipping the pea pod puree). The dish is a warm and delicious welcome to spring.

- 2 pounds/1 kg peas in the pod (about 1 ⅔ cups/255 g shelled peas; see headnote)
- 6 tablespoons/85 g unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 spring onion or 6 scallions, finely chopped
- 2 ounces/60 g pancetta, diced
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ½ clove garlic, minced
- 1 ¼ cups/255 g Vialone Nano or Carnaroli rice
- 2 teaspoons fine sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup/25 g grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

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Make the pea stock: Shell the peas into a small bowl and set aside. Transfer the pods to a colander. Remove the tough stems and the strings from the pods.

Transfer the pea pods to a medium pot, add cold water to cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for about 45 minutes, until the pods are very tender.

Strain the stock through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl, then transfer the pods to a food processor and

process until smooth. Pass the pea pod puree through a fine-mesh

strainer set over a clean bowl, pressing on the solids to release as much puree as possible. You should have about 2 cups/500 g puree and 3½ cups/840 ml stock.

Make the risi e bisi: In a medium saucepan, melt 3 tablespoons/45 g of the butter with the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add the spring onion, pancetta, parsley, and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes, until the onion is softened and golden. Add the peas and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes.

Add the pea stock, stir, and return to a simmer. Add the rice and simmer, stirring often, for about 10 minutes.

Add the pea pod puree and cook for about 10 more minutes, stirring, until most of the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is tender.

Remove from the heat, taste, and season with the salt and pepper. Add the remaining butter and the Parmigiano-Reggiano, stir, and serve immediately.