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Barley Risotto with Fresh Mushrooms

SERVES 8

You can find recipes for slow-cooker risotto made with traditional Arborio rice, but we prefer the texture of barley here. It holds up beautifully and doesn't get gummy. Earthy mushrooms flavor the dish the whole way through, while two cheeses and fresh chives round things out at the end.

7 cups vegetable broth, store-bought or homemade, or water
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
12 ounces fresh mushrooms, such as cremini, shiitake, or oyster, trimmed and sliced
2 shallots, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
2 cups pearl barley
2 ounces fresh goat cheese (about ½ cup), crumbled
½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (2 ounces), plus more, shaved, for serving
Snipped fresh chives, for garnish

Preheat a 5-to 6-quart slow cooker. Heat 6 cups broth in a saucepan over low.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon oil and 1 tablespoon butter in a large skillet over medium. Add half the mushrooms and sauté until tender, about 4 minutes; transfer to a bowl. Add remaining tablespoon oil and tablespoon butter, and sauté remaining mushrooms until tender, 4 minutes. Return reserved mushrooms to pan. Add shallots, garlic, 2 teaspoons salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and thyme; sauté for 2 minutes. Add barley, stirring to coat well. Increase heat to medium-high, add remaining cup broth, and cook, stirring to combine, until completely absorbed, about 4 minutes.

Transfer barley mixture to the slow cooker. Pour in broth and stir to combine. Cover and cook on high until barley is tender but still firm, 2 to 3 hours (or on low for 5 to 6 hours).

Before serving, stir in both cheeses with a fork until melted. Season with salt and pepper. Serve topped with shaved cheese and chives.



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