

# Spinach–Feta Risotto Balls

Chilling your risotto mixture overnight allows for a stickier texture, perfect for rolling into bite–size balls. Your guests will swoon for these crisp Greek–inspired treats and their accompanying Roasted Red Pepper Sauce.

By Cara Lyons | Photo: Cara Lyons



**Serves:** 15

**Hands–on time:** 40 minutes

**Total time:** 10 hours (includes chill time)

**CATEGORY:**

[Freezable](#)

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 cup finely chopped yellow onion
- 3 minced plus 2 whole cloves garlic, divided
- 1 cup pearl barley
- 2 1/2 cups low–sodium chicken broth
- 1 10–oz pkg frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 tsp dried dill
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

- 1/8 tsp fresh ground black pepper
- 2 tsp lemon zest
- 3 oz whole-wheat bread, sliced and toasted
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 4 oz feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 pepper, roasted, seeded, and peeled or 1/2 cup jarred roasted peppers, drained. [To make your own roasted peppers: Preheat broiler. Place peppers on a foil-lined baking sheet and mist with cooking spray on all sides. Cook under the broiler, turning every few minutes, until the pepper is charred on all sides. Transfer to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Cool for at least 30 minutes. When cool enough to handle, slice the pepper open, remove the seeds, and slip away the charred skin.]
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp sea salt

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil on medium. Add onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add minced garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add barley and broth. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, for 45 to 50 minutes, until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat and stir in spinach, dill, nutmeg, black pepper and lemon zest. Let mixture cool to room temperature, around 30 minutes, then transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate overnight (at least 8 hours).
2. In the bowl of a food processor, add bread and pulse into breadcrumbs. Transfer breadcrumbs to a large plate and set aside.

3. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Remove barley mixture from refrigerator and stir in eggs, coating thoroughly. Stir in feta cheese. Scoop 1 heaping tbsp of barley mixture and form into a ball. Roll ball in breadcrumbs until coated and transfer to baking sheet. Repeat with remaining mixture for 30 balls total.
4. Preheat oven to 425°F. Transfer risotto balls to oven and bake for 25 minutes, until crisp and lightly browned.
5. Meanwhile, prepare pepper sauce. In the bowl of food processor, blend yogurt, pepper, whole garlic, lemon juice, paprika, coriander and salt until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl and serve, or cover and chill in refrigerator until ready to serve.

Nutrients per serving (2 risotto bites and 1 tbsp sauce): Calories: 124, Total Fat: 3 g, Sat. Fat: 1 g, Carbs: 17 g, Fiber: 3 g, Sugars: 2 g, Protein: 7 g, Sodium: 255 mg, Cholesterol: 30 mg