

### Strategies Used:

- **Asparagus:** Varies wildly in price and condition in most areas of the country. At it's best in the spring, the price drops to around \$1.99 a bunch. I have seen it once for \$1.49 a bunch one time in the past few years and that was several weeks ago. I find the fresh so much better than the frozen, I don't ever buy it any other way. If Asparagus is not at a great price, use something else...peas, perhaps.
- **Olive Oil:** If you've been reading my blog, you should have the olive oil info down by now, but just in case: Buy small bottles with coupons when they are on sale. Look for two for one sales and use a coupon on each bottle if your store allows it, and definitely use it on you store's double coupon days if you have them. I plan on paying about 8 cents an ounce. You can find coupons often on coupons sites, manufacturer sites and even on hang tags for pasta in your store. Cost: 16 cents.
- **Onion:** I have an Aldi in my area and have found the prices for onion generally beat my store price. Do try to stock up during the fall and winter when prices are cheaper and keep in a cool dark place. They won't last forever, but if you check them and use them regularly, you'll save a bit of money. At the current pricing, 66 cents a pound, a 1/2 onion (an average onion is about 5 ounces) is 10 cents. Keep the other half wrapped in plastic wrap - I put it in my fridge door so I see it easily and remember to use it.
- **Arborio Rice:** This confounds my less cheap family - I use regular rice in my risotto. I think it turns out just fine, but for company I'd spring for the good stuff. I just stir it pretty vigorously at the beginning to get the starches going. I was lucky enough to have saved multiple coupons for Riceland Rice last year, and combined with my store's sales, I picked up a lot for free. Even if you don't have "free" rice, it's only pennies for a cup. I'll use the average 8 cents a cup price here, just in case you don't have it in your pantry for no cost.
- **Dry White Wine:** You can pick up very inexpensive wines on sale, generally you'll find fall and spring sales. You can buy multiple bottles for a case discount, too. I find if I shop carefully and ask someone in the store who knows his/her stuff, I can find something quite adequate. I've had no problem using leftover wines in recipes - I'll keep a bottle, sometimes, for several weeks before it's used up. If you don't want to bother with the wine, try using chicken stock in place of the 1/2 cup liquid, then add about a teaspoon and a half of white wine vinegar at the end of the cooking process. You could also add a tablespoon of lemon juice and 3 tablespoons of water in place of the 1/2 cup wine. I've seen many risotto recipes that don't use wine at all; it does add a certain something, though, and almost all recipes that don't use wine use something with a bit of acid for brightness.
- **Chicken Stock:** Again, I make my [Chicken Stock](#) from bones and scraps that I save. I don't count it as costing anything, although I do suppose the small flame for simmering (not much higher than a pilot light) costs something...I freeze for use later. If you don't use all the chicken stock for this recipe, try adding it to your cooking liquid for vegetables later in the week.

- **Butter:** It's generally \$1.99 on sale in my area. I try to stock up around any holidays, and am hoping it will drop down next week before Easter.
- **Parmesan:** Now here is where you could go very frugal with the canned, which I can generally pick up on a Kraft special with a coupon for about \$1.00. 1/2 cup is about 5 cents. If you buy 'cheap' parm from the store (coupons are far and few between) in our area you'll pay about \$5.99 a pound. I'd use about 1.5 ounces for this recipe so the cost is around 56 cents.