Wild Rice Pilaf

with snapdragon apples and pecans

This simple side dish is designed to provide a rich and luxurious complement to our feast and showcase some of the fall's rich bounty. Snapdragon apples are one of the area's newest apple variety and it is amazingly crisp and sweet. The crunch of the apple holds up throughout the cooking, adding great texture to this pilaf.

3 cups wild rice

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 cups thinly sliced leeks
2 cups diced snapdragon apples
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 clove minced garlic
1/4 cup chopped parsley
3 teaspoons kosher salt
2 teaspoons black pepper

1. Bring one gallon of water to a boil and add the rice. Return the water to a boil and then reduce to a hard simmer. Simmer the rice for about 20 minutes, or until it splits open and softens. When the rice is soft and cracked open, strain it into a colander and quickly rinse it off with hot water.

2. While the rice is cooking, place the butter and leeks into a large sauté pan and cook over medium heat until the leeks are soft and slightly translucent. Add the remaining ingredients and cook for five additional minutes.

3. Toss the rice into the sauté pan and cook for an additional three or four minutes — just until the rice is warmed.