

Arancini

Authentic Sicilian arancini recipe with crispy golden rice balls stuffed with meat, mozzarella, and peas. Perfect appetizer or main dish!

1h

PREP

45 min

COOK

1h 45min

TOTAL

6

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 cup rice
- 1 tsp saffron
- 2 cup water
- 2 tbsp parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup onion
- 1 cup carrot
- 1 cup celery
- 3 oz ground beef
- 2 tbsp dry red wine
- 2 tsp tomato paste
- 1 cup tomato
- 1 cup green bean
- 1 cup flour
- 2 egg
- 2 cup breadcrumb
- 4 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1 pinch black pepper

Instructions

1 **Make the risotto base**

Combine 1 cup arborio rice, 1 teaspoon saffron, and 2 cups water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, about 5-6 minutes.

2 Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15-18 minutes until water is absorbed and rice is tender. Remove from heat and let stand covered for 5 minutes.

3 Stir in 2 tablespoons butter, 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, 1 tablespoon salt, and 2 teaspoons black pepper. Spread rice on a large plate and cool completely, about 30 minutes.

4 **Prepare the filling**

Heat 1 cup olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 cup diced onion, 1 cup diced carrots, and 1 cup diced celery. Cook until softened and onions are translucent, about 8-10 minutes.

5 Add 3 oz ground beef and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until browned throughout, about 6-8 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons tomato paste and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.

6 Add 1 cup crushed tomatoes and simmer for 15 minutes until thickened, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper, then cool completely.

7 **Form the arancini**

With damp hands, scoop 2 tablespoons of cooled rice and flatten in your palm. Place 1 teaspoon of filling in center, then wrap rice around filling to form a ball. Repeat with remaining rice and filling.

8 **Bread the arancini**

Whisk together 1 cup flour, 2 eggs, 4 tablespoons water, and 1 pinch salt in a shallow bowl until smooth. Spread 1 cup breadcrumbs on a large plate.

9 Dip each rice ball in egg mixture, letting excess drip off, then roll in breadcrumbs to coat completely. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate for 20 minutes to firm up.

10 **Fry the arancini**

Heat 2 cups vegetable oil in a heavy pot to 360°F (182°C). Fry arancini in batches of 3-4 for 3-4 minutes until golden brown all over, turning as needed.

11 Transfer fried arancini to paper towels to drain excess oil. Serve immediately while hot and crispy.

Tips

For the best Sicilian arancini, use short-grain rice like Vialone Nano, Carnaroli, or Arborio. Don't try to use regular rice (boiled or steamed) for this recipe, as it is unlikely to stay together when trying to form a ball or cone.

Allow the rice to cool completely before shaping - warm rice will be too soft to hold its shape and the cheese filling may melt prematurely during the shaping process.

Keep your hands slightly damp when forming the rice balls to prevent sticking. This makes the shaping process much easier and creates smoother, more uniform arancini.

The meat filling should be completely cooled and relatively dry before using. Excess moisture can cause the rice balls to fall apart during frying.

Maintain oil temperature at 350-365°F for optimal results. Too hot and the outside burns before the inside heats through; too cool and they'll absorb excess oil and become greasy.

Don't overcrowd the frying pan - cook arancini in small batches of 2-3 pieces to maintain oil temperature and ensure even browning.

For lighter arancini, you can omit the diced fresh mozzarella, though the traditional version includes this melty cheese surprise in the center.

Rest the breaded arancini in the refrigerator for 20-30 minutes before frying if they seem loose - this helps them maintain their shape during cooking.