KitchenBooQ

Arancini alla Siciliana

Serves: 6 | Cooking Time 1 hour 25 minutes | Level: Capable



INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups (300 g) Arborio rice
4 cups (960 ml) chicken or beef broth
1/2 tsp saffron threads
3 tbsp (45 g) unsalted butter, divided
1 medium onion, finely diced
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
8 oz (225 g) lean ground beef or Italian sausage
1 tbsp tomato paste
1 cup (240 g) crushed tomatoes
6 oz (170 g) low-moisture mozzarella cheese, cut into small cubes
1/3 cup (50 g) frozen peas, thawed
1/2 cup (60 g) all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
1 1/2 cups (120 g) panko breadcrumbs
4 cups (960 ml) vegetable oil for frying

PREPARATION

1. Prepare the ragù filling by heating olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Brown the ground beef or sausage, breaking it into crumbles as it cooks. Add the diced onion and sauté until soft and translucent. Stir in the tomato paste and crushed tomatoes, then reduce heat to low. Simmer for twenty minutes until the mixture thickens significantly. Remove from heat, stir in the thawed peas, and allow the filling to cool completely.

2. Make the saffron risotto by bringing the broth to a gentle simmer in a saucepan. In a separate heavy pot, melt half of the butter over medium heat. Add the Arborio rice and toast for two minutes until edges turn slightly translucent. Ladle in warm broth one cup at a time, stirring constantly until absorbed before adding more. Continue this process until the rice is creamy but firm to the bite, about eighteen minutes. Remove from heat, stir in remaining butter and saffron threads, then spread onto a baking sheet to cool for fifteen minutes.

3. Assemble the arancini by taking a handful of slightly warm risotto and flattening it into a disc in your palm. Place one tablespoon of cooled ragù and one small cube of mozzarella in the center. Gather the rice around the filling, rolling gently between palms to form a tight ball without cracks or exposed edges. Repeat until all ingredients are used.

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PREPARATION

4. Set up a breading station by placing flour on one plate, whisked eggs on another, and panko breadcrumbs spread evenly on a third. Dredge each rice ball in flour, shake off excess, dip fully into beaten eggs, then coat thoroughly in panko. Press gently to help crumbs adhere. Place shaped arancini on a parchment-lined tray and refrigerate for thirty minutes to firm up before frying.

5. Heat vegetable oil in a deep pot or Dutch oven to three hundred fifty degrees Fahrenheit (one hundred seventy-five degrees Celsius). Fry the rice balls in small batches, turning occasionally, until deeply golden brown and crisp throughout, about four minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on a wire rack set over paper towels. Serve warm while the cheese center is still melted.

Notes
Cool cooked arancini within two hours of frying. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days. Never leave fried rice balls at room temperature due to the meat and dairy content. To freeze, place uncooked breaded balls on a tray and freeze until solid before transferring to a freezer bag for up to two months. Reheat refrigerated arancini in a three hundred seventy-five degree Fahrenheit (one hundred ninety degree Celsius) oven for twelve minutes or air fryer until crisp.