

Arancini Italian rice balls

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Arancini are golden, Italian fried rice balls filled with a rich , delicious meat sauce and creamy mozzarella cheese. They are an Italian street food that can be found all over Italy. These delicious rice balls whose name means “little oranges” in Italian due to their shape and color, are a beloved snack or appetizer enjoyed across Italy. With variations reflecting the unique flavors of different regions. From the classic meat and mozzarella- filled version to modern twist featuring saffron, peas or even vegetarian fillings. Whether served at an elegant dinner party or grabbed from a street vendor , arancini are the perfect blend of texture and taste- crunchy on the outside, tender and rich on the inside.

Steps to Make this Arancini Italian rice ball recipe easy

Making arancini can be simplified with a well- though-out prep plan.

Step one: Prep the rice or risotto a day or two in advance and refrigerate it.

Step two: The day your making arancini step up a workstation with everything you need: a bowl of your risotto , cubed mozzarella, meat filling, seasoned breadcrumbs and beaten egg.

Step Three: Shape the rice balls around the filling, dip in the egg and roll in the breadcrumbs. Arrange them on a parchment lined baking sheet. This step can be done hours

ahead or even a day ahead- just cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until you are ready to fry.

Step 4: Fry the arancini in hot oil until golden and crispy. Work in batches to avoid overcrowding the pan. If you're short on time or prefer a lighter version , bake them in the oven or air fryer. Serve hot.

By breaking the recipe into manageable steps and preparing in advance, you will find making arancini far less intimidating , leaving you more time to enjoy these crispy Italian rice balls.

Ingredients

- 4 cups leftover rice or risotto
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- FOR THE MEAT FILLING
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 cup chopped celery + 1 cup peeled and chopped carrot
- 1 cup diced pancetta or bacon
- 1/2 lb. ground beef + 1/2 lb. ground pork
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 2 cups crushed tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp. dried Italian herbs
- 1 cup peas (optional)
- Ingredients to assemble:
- 4 mozzarella sticks cut into 4 pieces
- INGREDIENTS FOR THE COATING
- 1 egg slightly beaten
- 2 cups breadcrumbs

- 1/2 cup grated parmesan
- 1 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley

Instructions

1. Mix the cooked rice with 1 egg , 1 cup of grated parmesan cheese and the Italian parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Set aside while preparing the meat filling.
2. To make the meat sauce: Start in 2 Tbsp. of olive oil by cooking the pancetta or bacon until crisp, then add the celery, onion, garlic and carrots and cook until soft . Once the vegetables are soft add the meats and cook until browned breaking up the meat as it cooks.
3. Add the wine and let it evaporate before adding the tomato paste and water. Bring to a boil, then turn down to a simmer cover and cook for one hour. If using peas add them to the meat sauce the last 10 minutes .
4. This recipe uses about 3 cups of meat filling any leftovers can be used for pasta sauce.
5. To assemble and fry; the rice should be warm for easier forming , if the rice has be in the fridge warm in the microwave.
6. Wet your hands this will make forming the rice balls easier. Take about 1 Tbsp. of rice and flatten into your cupped hand. Place 1Tbsp. of the meat filling and 1 piece of the mozzarella in the center and roll into a ball making sure all the filling is covered .
7. Then in a bowl mix the breadcrumbs with the parmesan cheese and Italian parsley. In another bowl whisk the egg slightly
8. Dip the arancini balls first in the egg and then in the breadcrumb mixture. Now refrigerate for 30 minutes or even overnight.
9. Then bring 3 cups of canola – olive oil blend to medium high heat and fry the rice balls until golden brown about 5 minutes.
10. Drain on absorbent paper . serve hot. ENJOY!!!!!!