

Arancini (Rice Balls) with Marinara Sauce

Makes about 1 dozen

4 cups Arborio rice (brown rice may be substituted)
5 large eggs
1 1/2 cups freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
1 1/2 cups Italian-style breadcrumbs
2/3 cups finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 tablespoons garlic powder
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
1 pound fresh buffalo mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1/2 pound hot capicola or prosciutto, cut into 1/4 x 1/2-inch pieces*
Canola oil, for frying
Marinara Sauce

Place rice and 5 cups of water in a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a medium-low and cook, covered, stirring often, until water is completely absorbed, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl; set aside until completely cooled.

Stir 3 eggs, one at a time, into cooled rice. Add Parmesan, parsley, and garlic powder; stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper.

Fill a large bowl with water. Dip your hands into the water and then form rice mixture into a 2 1/2-inch ball. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat process until all of the rice has been used. Using 2 fingers, make an indentation in each ball. Fill with one cube of mozzarella cheese and one piece of capicola or prosciutto. Press together to enclose. If necessary, add more rice mixture to cover.

Beat remaining 2 eggs in a medium bowl. Place breadcrumbs in a shallow dish. Dip each rice ball first in egg mixture, and then in breadcrumbs to coat. Gently remold rice balls if they begin to lose their round shape. Return to parchment paper-lined baking sheet; set aside.

Heat 5 inches of oil in a large Dutch-oven until it reaches 350 on a deep-fry thermometer. Using a slotted spoon, gently lower one rice ball at a time into hot



This recipe was selected by The Martha Stewart Show as part of the “America Cooks” series. I was very excited and flattered to be invited to cook with Martha on her show!

oil, working in batches if necessary. Cook rice balls, turning, until brown and crispy on all sides, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Serve immediately with marinara sauce.

Marinara Sauce: (Makes enough for about 1 dozen Arancini)

1/4 cup olive oil
1 small onion, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 (32-ounce) can whole Italian plum tomatoes and their juices
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
2 bay leaves
2 teaspoons coarse salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Heat oil in a large, nonreactive skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic, and cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes.

Place tomatoes in a large bowl, reserving juices. Crush tomatoes using your hands. Add tomatoes and reserved juices to skillet. Stir in red pepper, bay leaves, salt, and pepper. Increase heat and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until slightly thickened, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Remove sauce from heat, stir in cheese. Remove bay leaves before serving.

** Recipe Variations:*

Vegetable filling – Use one small can of peas and carrots, or any vegetable you prefer along with the mozzarella.

Ground Beef filling – Use the Ground Beef Sauce recipe on page 39. Chill the sauce so it will be easier to stuff into the rice balls. Add the mozzarella cube on top of the ground beef in the rice ball.