

arancini with smoked mozzarella & garlic mayonnaise

Of all the canapés that I've made and served in my lifetime, these little golden balls of delight are always scooped up first. They originated in Italy as a way to use up leftover risotto – the cold rice mixture is rolled into balls, stuffed with smoky cheese, crumbed and deep-fried. To add to the decadence, I serve it with a tangy garlic mayo. You can never get enough of it!

Note: Chilled risotto handles easier than room temperature, so use the leftover risotto straight from the fridge. Assemble and re-refrigerate the balls in advance (with crumbs galore), then deep-fry just before serving.

Serves 6 as a snack/canapé

Aïoli (garlic mayonnaise)

2 egg yolks
1 clove garlic
5 ml (1 teaspoon) Dijon mustard
30 ml (2 tablespoons) freshly squeezed lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
salt and freshly ground black pepper
180–250 ml canola oil

Arancini

about 500 ml (2 cups) prepared leftover risotto, chilled (any flavour will do, see page 149)
100 g smoked mozzarella, cut into 1 cm cubes
125 ml (½ cup) flour
salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 eggs, lightly whisked
500 ml (2 cups) fresh breadcrumbs
750 ml (3 cups) canola oil

For the aïoli, place the yolks, garlic, mustard and lemon juice in a blender or food processor. Season with salt and pepper then blend well. With the motor running, add the oil in a thin stream until fully incorporated and thick and creamy. Transfer to a glass jar and refrigerate until ready to use.

For the arancini, take a small tablespoon of cold risotto and insert a cube of mozzarella. Shape the risotto to cover the cheese and roll it into a neat ball (cold risotto is easier to shape). Continue until all the risotto is used.

In a shallow bowl, mix the flour with some salt and pepper. Place the breadcrumbs in another shallow bowl, and the eggs in yet another.

Dip each risotto ball into the seasoned flour, then into the egg and then into the breadcrumbs, covering it all over. Place on a clean plate and repeat.

Heat the oil to about 180 °C, then fry batches of arancini until golden all over – about 3 minutes. Serve with the aïoli.

Tip: Use a small plastic bag to pipe blobs of aïoli onto a serving board, then 'stick' the arancini onto each piped blob to keep them from rolling around.

