

**GF Friendly****Savoury Rice Balls****tasty balls of savoury rice, crumbed and fried**

Better known as arancini, this dish is quite easy to make and can be served hot or cold as a separate course, or just included as a different party snack with the other finger-food. Arborio rice seems to be the best type and, despite what I've said about flushing the starch out, you can't do it with this one because the consistency needs to be soft and sticky – otherwise the balls will fall to bits in the frypan; and nobody wants that to happen! Other ingredients are a matter of personal choice so you can change one or more to suit your fancy.

2½ cups chicken stock	1 cup arborio rice
150g chopped mushrooms	1 onion chopped fine
3 lean bacon rashers, finely chopped	
1 Tbsp olive oil	20g butter
125g grated cheddar cheese	¼ cup grated parmesan
½ cup plain flour	1 cup dry breadcrumbs
salt and ground black pepper	1 tsp minced garlic
1 large egg, beaten together with 3 Tbsps milk	



light-tasting olive oil, sufficient for shallow frying – no more than ½ inch (1cm) deep

Bring the chicken stock to the boil in a large saucepan; then stir in the rice. Reduce the heat to simmer, cover and continue cooking for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat, but leave the lid on for a further 15 minutes to finish off. Once the time is up, transfer to a bowl – this needs to be big enough to include the cheeses and the fried ingredients.

Prepare these beforehand and fry them while the rice is cooking. Use a medium frypan or skillet over a medium heat to melt the butter in 1 Tbsp oil. Put in the onion, garlic, bacon and mushroom, stir together and cook for 8-10 minutes until golden. Add this to the rice along with the cheeses and combine well, then allow to cool. Place in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

Three dishes on hand make the next stage easier – one for the egg and milk mix; another for the flour; and a third for the breadcrumbs. Shape tablespoons of the mixture into balls, coat each lightly with flour, dip in the egg, then roll in the crumbs - be gentle.

I used a wok for the last stage. Shallow fry the arancini in the olive oil, but do them in batches, turning carefully until golden all over. Drain them on paper towel, then transfer each batch to a lined tray and keep warm in the oven until ready to serve.

Makes 22 large rice balls

They freeze well (don't we all?)

A Season of Happiness - helping you towards a better lifestyle

For a look at some more informative articles on a variety of subjects just click on the navigation bar

