

## **Smoked Mozzarella Arancini**

Adapted from [Big Night In](#) by Domenica Marchetti (Chronicle, 2008)

I'm going to cheat here by asking you to make whatever kind of risotto you like. I'm not going to give you a recipe, because you can find one easily enough, and, in fact, you probably have one in your arsenal already.

Just as when you make fried rice, you need the risotto to be extremely cold for it to maintain its shape during frying, so I strongly, strongly encourage you to refrigerate the cooked risotto overnight before proceeding.

You will also need 2 or 3 eggs, smoked mozzarella cut into very small cubes (I used about 8 ounces), panko, and vegetable or olive oil. You'll also want some of your favorite marinara sauce for dipping.

Set up a breading station with separate bowls of flour, beaten egg (start with two) and panko.

Take about 2 teaspoons of the cold, cooked risotto into your palm, and press a cubed piece of cheese in the center. Form the rice into a ball, encasing the cheese completely so you can't see it. (If it's sticky, try wetting your hands.) Roll the ball first in the flour, then in the eggs (use a fork if you like), and finally in the panko. Place it on a large rimmed sheet pan, and continue with the remaining rice, cheese, and breading ingredients.

To fry: heat vegetable or olive oil to the depth of one inch in a deep frying pan. Affix a thermometer to the side, if you have one, so you can do your best to maintain a temperature of 350 degrees.

Carefully fry 6 to 8 arancini at a time, making sure not to crowd the pan, and turn for 3 or 4 minutes (or less, or more, depending on how big they are) until they're nicely browned all over. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel lined platter to drain. Repeat.

Serve immediately, with warm marinara sauce for dipping.

Yield will vary, depending on how much risotto you begin with.