

Saffron Rice + Potato Balls

kobeh-ye kordi

Makes 20 croquettes

Prep: 50 minutes

Cooking: 35 minutes

SHELL

1¼ cups/250g jasmine rice, soaked for 30 minutes, drained

½lb/225g russet potatoes, peeled and grated

2 teaspoons fine sea salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

½ teaspoon ground saffron threads or

1 teaspoon turmeric

2 tablespoons rice flour

FILLING

2 tablespoons oil

2 medium onions, finely chopped

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

½ teaspoon turmeric

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

2 teaspoons tomato paste

½ cup/80g barberries, soaked 20 minutes, drained and rinsed

¼ cup/35g raisins

1 cup/85g chopped fresh parsley

¼ cup/40g chopped fresh tarragon, or 1 tablespoon dried

1 cup/125g walnuts, ground

EGG WASH

2 eggs

WRAP

Butter lettuce, basil, and mint leaves

Traditionally, the filling of these potato croquettes is made with lamb and deep fried. It's also made in various parts of Iran without the potato. If you want to try them the traditional way: For the filling, add ½ pound of ground lamb with the onion in step 3 and reduce the walnuts to 2 tablespoons. I prefer to make them vegetarian and bake them in the oven.

1. **To make the shell:** In a medium-sized non-stick saucepan, place the rice and potato. Add 2½ cups/500ml water, the salt, pepper, and saffron. Bring to a boil over medium-low heat, while stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, until all the water has been absorbed and the rice is tender. Remove from heat.

2. Transfer the potato and rice mixture, while still warm, to the bowl of an electric mixer, add the rice flour and mix until you have a **smooth paste that does not stick to your hand**. Set aside and allow to cool.

3. Meanwhile, **to make the filling:** Heat the oil in a wide skillet over medium heat and sauté the onion until golden brown. Add the rest of the ingredients for the filling and sauté for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

4. Preheat oven 450F°/230C°. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper and paint evenly with oil.

5. Use an ice-cream scoop to take a walnut-sized scoop of the paste. Moisten your hands and flatten it in the palm of your hand. Place 1 tablespoon of the filling on top. Fold over to close it up, smooth it out, and shape it into a ball (or egg-shaped, or patties, according to your fancy). Repeat for all the paste and arrange them on the prepared sheet pan as you make them.

6. **For the egg wash:** Beat the eggs for 5 minutes until smooth. Roll each ball in the egg wash. Transfer to the sheet pan and generously paint each ball with oil. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until golden and crispy.

7. Serve as a wrap using green leaf lettuce or lavash bread with the caramelized barberries and fresh herbs. *Nush-e joon!*

TO DEEP FRY

Heat 2 cups oil in a small saucepan over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Fry in batches, 4 at a time until golden on all sides (about 5 minutes on each side). Remove from the oil using a slotted spoon and drain on a sheet pan lined with paper towel.