



# « Arancine »

## *from tradition to innovation*



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## ARANCINE'S HISTORY... AND GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN

The arancina was born in Palermo but over the centuries, it was diffused in the rest of Sicily. The name "arancina" derives from the "orange" fruit and means "small orange".

The origin of this dish dates back to the time of the Arab domination in Sicily, which lasted from the 9th to the 11th centuries. The Arabs were used to mixing a little saffron rice in the palm of their hands, then to season it with lamb before eating it. The comparison with an orange was natural in Sicily because this fruit is very common everywhere in the island.

In Palermo, it was called "arancina", while in Catania and Messina its name was "arancino" (masculine) or "arancini" (plural). The ball shape is characteristic of the arancina from Palermo, while the conical one is typical of Catania.

The idea to give to this delicious recipe a little crunchy biscuit and the round form, derives from a practical need. Indeed, it seems that King Frederic II of the House of Swabia liked this dish at the point that he wanted to carry it with him during his hunting days in the "Ficuzza" wood close to Palermo. Therefore, one thought of frying these rice pellets in a scented breadcrumb to be able to transport them.





Photographs of Frederic II's Royal Palace and of the "Ficuzza" Wood

## RECIPE

In Sicily, you will find the arancini everywhere and everytime, as an aperitif, a main course or also in the streets as "street food".



In this recipe, I will show you the typically Sicilian arancina with veal ragout and its ham-cheese alternative.

There exists also an innovative alternative with swordfish and aubergines.

## Ingredients :

### **Ingredients for 20 arancine:**

1 kg rice twelve-carat alloy  
1.5 liter vegetable stock  
1 leek or 1 average white onion  
1 sachet saffron  
30 g butter  
50 g grated Parmesan cheese or caciocavallo  
3 soup spoons extra virgin olive oil  
salt according to taste

### **For a stuffing with veal ragout:**

200 g chopped veal  
200 g ground pork  
tomato sauce.  
300 g fresh or frozen peas.  
1 carrot  
1 celery  
1 average white onion  
1 glass of red wine  
olive oil.

### **For breadcrumbs:**

100 g flour  
salt and pepper  
one half-liter water  
300 g breadcrumb for breadcrumbs  
grape-pip oil for the crackling

### Various alternatives

### **For a stuffing with swordfish and aubergines:**

1 kg rice  
1 liter and half of fish stock.  
2 leeks  
1 sachet saffron  
30 g butter  
3 soup spoons extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper  
600 g swordfish  
500 g aubergine

### **For a stuffing with ham**

60 g cooked ham  
120 g mozzarella



## Preparation with a stuffing with ragout or ham



To prepare rice pellets, start by boiling rice in 1.2 salted boiling water L (1) so that, after cooking, the water is completely absorbed (the starch remains in the pot and thus, you will obtain a very dry and compact rice). Cook during approximately 15 minutes, then dissolve the saffron in a little water and merge it to the cooked rice (2). Mix with butter (3).



Add grated cheese (4) and mix the whole well. Pour and spread out rice over a broad plate (5) and recover it with a plastic film. Let it completely cool. The film prevents the surface of the rice from drying.

In the meantime, care for the stuffing: the meat ragout. Peel and cut finely onion, carrot and celery (6).



Brown the onion, the carrot and celery chopped in a frying pan with 2 soup spoons olive oil and butter (7), then add chopped veal and ham (8); brown at high heat, then add the wine (9) and let it evaporate.



Now, add tomato purée (10), add salt and pepper according to your taste and simmer with a cover during 20 minutes.

At mid-cooking, add the garden peas (11-12) (if necessary, you can add a little warm water, so, the sauce will be coagulated and not liquid).



When the peas are cooked, cut the cacioavallo in dices (13).

For the stuffing with ham, cut out ham (14) as well as the mozzarella (15) in dices.



Once the rice is completely cooled (it will take at least a few hours), with a soup spoon, remove approximately 120 g rice, put it in the centre of the hand to form a basin (16). Pour there a coffee spoon of ragout (17) and add some cheese dices (18).



Then, add some rice to cover and close the rice pellet (19) by giving it a ball or conical shape (20). For the stuffing with ham, stuff each arancina (formed by approximately 130 g rice) with ham dices and mozzarella (21).



This option is traditionally called “al burro” (22).

Now that all arancini are ready (23), prepare the paste to fry them:

pour the flour in a bowl, a small amount of salt and a trickle (24).

Mix well the whole with a whip to avoid lumps.



Then plunge the arancini, one by one, in the paste (25) while trying to cover them entirely (26) and roll them in breadcrumb (27).



In a pan, heat oil at the temperature of 170-180 °C, then fry an arancino at a time (28) (two at a time would cause a drop of the oil temperature). When they are brown-gilded coloured (29), place them on a plate covered with paper napkins (30) to wipe oil in excess.

### Conservation

You can preserve the arancini in a refrigerator during a few days.

If you used only fresh ingredients, you can also freeze them if not fried, because it's far better to fry them just before eating.

... Enjoy arancine !