

Lamb Shawarma-Charred Eggplant Croquettes with Saffron Couscous paired with Davis Estates Cabernet Franc

INGREDIENTS:

Lamb Shawarma-Charred Eggplant Croquettes

1 large globe eggplant charred
1/3 pound ground lamb
1/3 pound ground beef
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon freeze dried shallots
1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
2 teaspoons Paprika
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon sumac
1 cup panko, ground fine in a food processor

As needed for breading

Egg
Panko
Flour
Oil for frying

SERVES: 6-8

Croquettes Dipping Sauce

1 cup crème fraîche
3/4 cup Greek yogurt
3 bunch dill chopped fine
Zest from two lemons

Saffron Couscous

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
3/4 cup chopped shallots (3 to 4 shallots)
1 1/4 cup chicken stock
Pinch of saffron threads
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup couscous
1/2 cup frozen peas
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/2 cup chopped Marcona almonds

Steamed Carrots

2 bunches baby carrots
2 tablespoons butter
Salt & pepper to taste

METHOD:

Lamb Shawarma-Charred Eggplant Croquettes

- Poke the eggplant a couple times with a fork and set on an aluminum-foil-lined baking sheet. Place the sheet under the broiler a couple of inches from the heat and cook until charred all over, about 20 - 30 minutes.
- Place the eggplant to a bowl and cover with a lid. Let it rest until cool enough to handle, about 30 minutes.
- Remove the charred skin from the eggplant and chop the flesh to a fine dice. Place back in your mixing bowl and refrigerate.
- Once chilled, add in lamb, beef, salt, garlic, paprika, cinnamon, cumin, oregano, sumac, and ground panko. Mix well then use a tablespoon to form round croquettes about the size of a quarter.
- Set up a standard breading station of three containers: flour, egg and water mixture, and the ground panko.
- Bread each piece, dipping in flour, egg mixture then panko.
- Heat fryer to 350 degrees F. Working in batches, fry the croquettes until golden on all sides and cooked through. Remove cooked croquettes and drain on a rack to maintain crispness.

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Croquettes Dipping Sauce

- Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Refrigerate until you are ready to serve.

Saffron Couscous

- In a large saucepan, melt your butter on medium heat.
- Add the shallots and cook them over medium-low heat until translucent, about three minutes.
- Add the chicken stock, saffron, salt, and pepper and bring to a boil.
- Stir in the couscous and frozen peas and return to a boil.
- Turn off heat, cover the pan, and set aside for 6 minutes.
- Add parsley and chopped almonds and fluff with a fork to combine.

Steamed Carrots

- Place carrots in a steamer basket. Add water to the bottom of a saucepan so it is below the steamer basket, about 1 cup.
- Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cover. Allow carrots to steam 6-10 minutes or until tender-crisp.
- Toss carrots with butter, salt, and pepper.

To Finish

On a warm plate, spread a generous amount of Croquettes Dipping Sauce. Place the Lamb Shawarma-Charred Eggplant Croquettes on top. Garnish with a spoonful of Saffron Couscous and Steamed Carrots on the side. Serve immediately with a glass of Cabernet Franc.