

LOBSTER CROQUETTES

from Viviana Carballo

Don't feel intimidated by the long list of ingredients, the recipe is easy to understand if you break it down in steps – and the delicious results are very well worth the trouble.

For the béchamel

4 ounces butter

¾ cups flour

2 ½ cups milk, hot

1 teaspoon salt (or more to taste)

freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon seafood essence*

1 ounce grated Manchego cheese

For the lobster

1 teaspoon butter

1 cup minced onion

8 ounces cooked lobster meat, chopped

½ teaspoon red pepper flakes, or less to taste

2 tablespoon minced parsley

For frying

1 cup flour (or more)

1 large egg, well beaten with 2 tablespoon cream or milk

1 cup fine breadcrumbs (or more)

canola oil for frying

*seafood essence comes in concentrated form and can be found at any gourmet market.

For the béchamel: In a medium sized saucepan heat the butter until it foams, add flour, salt and pepper and red pepper flakes and stir with a whisk. Gradually add the hot milk while stirring. Continue to stir well to avoid lumps until the sauce thickens. Add seafood essence and the cheese, stir to mix well.

For the lobster: In a small skillet melt the butter and wilt the onion, add lobster meat and the rest of the ingredients, stir. Add the lobster mixture to the béchamel and stir.

Transfer to a platter and spread evenly. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until completely cool. It is better left overnight.

To fry: place about 2 to 3 inches of oil in a heavy skillet, preferably iron or in a deep fryer. These will give take a higher temperature. Heat to 375 degrees F at medium high.

Sprinkle flour evenly on the work surface. Beat the egg and cream together in a bowl. Place breadcrumbs in a bowl. To shape the croquettes dip a teaspoon in oil and take a small amount of the lobster batter to shape into small cylinders. Lightly roll in flour, dip in egg and roll in the bread crumbs. Place on a platter until ready to fry, repeat until lobster mixture is all used adding more breadcrumbs as necessary. (Can be done ahead up to here)

Fry the croquettes a few at a time (5 – 6), moving them with a slotted spoon to make sure they are golden on all sides. Transfer to a platter lined with paper towels and keep warm in a low oven until all are done. Do not cover or they will lose their crunch.