

Reypenaer VSOP croquettes with a coarse-grain mustard sauce

You can use this basic recipe to experiment and vary in all kinds of ways. Shape into small balls to make mini-croquettes (bitterballen) to serve with drinks. The larger croquettes make a delicious lunch dish, particularly if they are served on a slice of grilled sourdough bread and garnished with deep-fried parsley. Vary the filling by folding in chopped fresh herbs or cubes of cooked or raw ham. This recipe uses panko, a type of Japanese breadcrumb, which gives an extra crispy crust. You could also use fresh or toasted breadcrumbs if you prefer.

Ingredients for about 50 mini-croquettes or 15 regular croquettes:

- 200 g butter,
- 220 g + 250 g flour,
- 1 litre milk,
- freshly grated nutmeg,
- 360 g grated Reypenaer VSOP,
- 6 leaves of gelatine, soaked,
- 4 egg yolks,
- 160 g cream,
- 250 g beaten egg white,
- 250 g Japanese breadcrumbs (panko),
- deep-frying oil.

Ingredients for the mustard sauce:

- 3 egg yolks,
- the juice of 1 lemon,
- 2 tbs coarse-grain mustard,
- 2 dl sunflower oil,
- 1 dl avocado oil,
- freshly ground black pepper,
- 'fleur de sel' French sea salt.

To make the croquettes, melt the butter in a thick-bottomed saucepan until it begins to foam, and then add 220 grams flour. Keep stirring all the time until the mixture comes away from the bottom of the pan and the roux begins to sweat. Turn down the heat and add the milk, little by little, mixing it in to the roux until it binds together and there are no lumps. Cook for a few minutes to remove any remaining floury taste. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg and then dissolve the soaked gelatine in the mixture. Remove the pan from the heat, beat the cream and eggs together and stir into the mixture. Mix in the grated Reypenaer and add seasoning to taste. Pour into a greased ovenproof dish, cover with clingfilm and allow to set in the fridge overnight. The next day, cut the mixture into small pieces to make mini-croquettes, or into strips to form regular croquettes. Toss them lightly in flour and roll the mixture by hand into the desired shape, then set them aside to firm up once more. In the meantime, get 3 dishes ready; one with 250 grams flour, one with beaten egg white and one with breadcrumbs. Toss the croquettes in the flour, shake off any excess and then place them in the egg white. Roll them around to ensure they are evenly coated, drain and then put them in the breadcrumbs, rolling them around to ensure that they are properly coated on all sides. Repeat the process if you want an extra crispy crust. Heat the deep-frying oil to 175°C and lower the croquettes in gently. Make sure you do not fry too many at once. Fry the croquettes until they are golden brown and then drain on kitchen paper. Serve with the home-made mustard sauce.

To make the sauce, beat the egg yolks together with the lemon juice and the mustard and season well with salt and pepper. Add both oils drop by drop, beating all the time, so that the mixture emulsifies and thickens. Adjust the seasoning to taste with salt and pepper and an extra squeeze of lemon juice if desired.

