

## Persian Saffron Ice Cream



- 2 tbsp heavy cream or half & half
- 1 lb vanilla ice cream
- 2 tsp rosewater
- 1 pinch saffron, ground
- 4-5 tbsp pistachios
- 4-5 tbsp cashews (optional)
- 4 crispy wafer cookies

Line a small dish with plastic wrap and pour the cream in so it's evenly spread across the dish. Freeze for 2 to 3 hours. You can do this the night before to save time. This will be added later as a topping for an extra burst of creaminess.

Empty the vanilla ice cream in a large bowl and allow it to melt for 10 to 15 minutes. Be careful not to let it melt completely as it might refreeze with water crystals and you want it to be as creamy as possible.

Boil water in a kettle and pour ½ cup into a small bowl. Add ¼ tsp of saffron and stir until dissolved. You can also grind larger pieces of saffron with the back of a teaspoon and add to the water.

Let it brew for 1 to 2 minutes and then pour it into the bowl with the ice cream. Mix thoroughly so the ice cream turns an even, distinctive saffron-yellow color throughout.

Add the rosewater and mix thoroughly. You can add the pistachios (and cashews) whole or ground, either to the ice cream mix, or later as a topping. Be sure to mix well with a whisk or large wooden spoon. Mix the frozen cream or half and half into the ice cream or use it as a topping, letting it melt slightly before adding it. Serve with thin wafer cookies.

Note: At one time, Ben and Jerry used saffron to make their French vanilla ice cream yellow.

➔ Thanks to ML Wholey, Saffronnet subscriber.

## Saffron Margarita



What can be better at the end of a day of harvesting saffron flowers than a refreshing adult beverage that combines the distinctive aroma and floral notes of saffron? One of our favorites is a saffron margarita. If you don't have saffron on hand, you can use saffron-infused tequila. Or even better, you can hand-craft your libation by sprinkling a couple threads of fresh saffron into your shaker. Enjoy!

- Juice of 1 lime
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1.5 fluid oz tequila
- 1 tsp orange liqueur (e.g., triple sec, Grand Marnier)
- 2-3 saffron threads
- 1 cup ice cubes

Squeeze lemon and lime juices into a cocktail shaker, add sugar, pour tequila over the mixture and then add saffron threads and ice. Cover shaker and shake for 1 minute. Let the shaker rest for 1-2 minutes. Rub the lemon around the rim of the glass and pour margarita into the glass. Top with the orange liqueur.



## *A Saffron Sampler*

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Saffron is an ancient and highly prized culinary spice. It has a unique aroma, which imparts food with a special taste and also gives food a distinctive yellow color. Saffron is widely used in Persian, Indian, European, Arab and Turkish cuisines. For example, it is commonly used in Milanese risotto of Italy, the paella of Spain, French bouillabaisse, and for biryani with various meat accompaniments in South Asia. Candy and liquors also often include saffron. Rumor has it that at one time Ben and Jerry used saffron to give their French vanilla ice cream its rich yellow color.



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## Persian Saffron Rice (Tahdig)



- 2 ½ cups long grain white basmati rice
- 10-12 saffron threads, crushed and dissolved in 3 tbsp hot water
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 3 tbsp salt
- Water

In a large bowl wash rice with cool water a few times and drain. Soak the rice in 8 cups of cool water, add 3 tbsp of salt and set aside for 2-3 hours.

In a large non-stick pot with a tight-fitting lid, bring 8 cups of water to a boil on med-high heat. Drain the soaked rice and pour into the boiling water. Boil the rice for 10 minutes or until the grains are long and soft on the outside and hard in the center. Drain the rice and rinse.

Wash the rice pot with water and return to heat. Add 2 tbsp oil, 2 tbsp butter and 1 tbsp of saffron liquid and evenly cover the bottom of the pot with oil. Remove from heat. Return the rice to the pot, shaping it into a pyramid with a large spatula, pushing the rice away from the sides of the pot. Make 4-5 holes in the rice with the spatula handle to release steam. Place the pot back on the stove on med-high heat, uncovered. Wait 7-10 minutes or until steam starts coming out of the pot.

Gently pour 2 tbsp oil, ¼ cup water and remaining saffron liquid over the rice, cover the lid with a kitchen towel or 2-3 layers of thick paper towels, lower the heat and steam the rice for 1 hour. Remove the tahdig with a spatula and cut into small pieces and serve on a platter.

→ Thanks to Brian Madsen, Saffronnet subscriber.

## Chicken Paella

- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Pinch of saffron threads
- Olive oil
- 2 medium chicken breasts, cut in 1-inch chunks
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- Kosher salt to taste
- ½ yellow onion chopped
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 6 oz canned diced tomato
- 2 cups unsalted chicken stock
- 2 cups green peas
- 1 red bell pepper
- Fresh chopped parsley
- Lemon wedges

In a large skillet cook chicken in oil until tender, 6-8 minutes and sprinkle with pepper and salt. Set chicken aside. Add oil to the pan if necessary, then sauté onion until tender. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more.

Combine lemon juice, 1 tbsp warm water and saffron in bowl, and let the mixture sit for 15-20 minutes.

Add white wine and scrape pan with wooden spoon to remove browned parts. When wine cooks, off add rice, tomatoes, paprika and salt and pepper to taste. Stir and cook for 2-3 minutes until rice starts to brown. Add chicken broth and saffron mixture. Stir in chicken and simmer, covered, 12 to 15 minutes or until nearly all liquid is absorbed by the rice. Uncover pan.

Add peas and sliced red pepper. Increase heat to med-high and cook for 4-5 minutes more, until rice begins to brown on the edges of pan. Garnish with parsley and serve with lemon wedges.



→ Thanks to Harvey Clawson for this recipe.

## Meatballs with Saffron Rice



- 1 medium onion
- ½ lb ground beef
- 1 tsp ground saffron dissolved in ¼ cup hot water
- 1 tsp butter
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp tomato sauce
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp pepper
- Salt to taste
- 1 lb long-grain white rice cooked with saffron
- Fresh parsley or mint leaves for garnish

Prepare Persian saffron rice and set aside. This is done by cooking long-grain white rice according to the standard directions, adding a pinch of ground saffron during cooking.

Place the ground beef in a large bowl. Grate the onion using a blender or chop finely. Add to beef and mix in spices.

By hand, mix in half of the saffron with the beef and continue working it through until the mixture thickens enough to form into balls. Then form the mixture into ½ inch meatballs.

Add the oil and butter to a non-stick pan and place the meatballs in the pan. Sauté the meatballs over medium-low heat until they begin to brown.

Mix in the remaining saffron mixture, and lower the heat to low, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Add the tomato sauce and gently stir for 4-5 minutes.

→ Thanks to the Univ. of Vermont Iranian Students Association.