

# Croquetas de Jamon

*from Hot Dish with Sohla*

*makes about 20 croquetas / active time: 1 hour / total time: at least 3 hours*

## INGREDIENTS:

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### for the filling:

2 tablespoons butter  
½ small yellow onion, finely chopped  
kosher salt  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 cup whole milk  
2 ounces ham, finely chopped (about ¼ cup)  
2 ounces Manchego cheese, coarsely grated (½ heaped cup)

### for breading & frying:

½ cup all-purpose flour  
kosher salt  
1 large egg  
1 tablespoons water  
1 cup breadcrumbs (I prefer panko)  
high smoke point fat for frying, like peanut, safflower, or refined coconut oil

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1. **Make the filling:** In a medium sauce pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Once the butter is foamy, add the onion, pinch of salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 2 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until bubbly and blonde, about 2 minutes.
2. Slowly stream in the milk while whisking constantly then simmer, whisking frequently, until thick and creamy, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the ham and cheese. Taste and add salt if needed.
3. Scrape the filling into a bowl or container, cover, and put in the fridge to fully cool, at least 2 hours and up to 2 days.
4. **Roll the filling:** Once cool, use a cookie scoop or two spoons to divide into 2-tablespoon portions. Roll each portion into a smooth ball, arrange on a small baking tray or plate, and place in the freezer to chill at least 10 minutes.
5. **Bread the filling:** In a medium bowl, whisk the flour with a big pinch of salt. In another medium bowl, whisk the egg, water, and pinch of salt until thoroughly combined. In a third medium bowl, add the breadcrumbs.
6. Working with one to two portions of rolled and chilled filling at a time: Coat the ball in flour, gently shaking off any excess, and drop into the egg wash. Use a fork to roll in egg wash to evenly coat, then lift, drain off excess wash, and drop into breadcrumbs. Roll the ball to evenly coat in

crumbs and return to small sheet tray or plate. Repeat until all the balls are coated. (At this point, you can freeze the croquetas on the tray, then transfer to a zip top bag and fry as needed from frozen.)

7. **Fry the croquetas:** Add enough fat to come 1-inch up the sides of a small or medium skillet or dutch oven. Heat the oil until it registers 375F on a frying/candy thermometer, or when you drop a bit of bread crumb into the oil it vigorously bubbles but doesn't brown immediately.
8. Use a slotted spoon to gently lower the croquetas into the oil and fry until golden brown, flipping once to fry both sides, about 1 minute per side. (If frying from frozen, only fry 2 to 4 croquetas at a time to avoid dropping the temperature of the oil.) Transfer to a paper towel lined tray to drain and serve right away.

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**Notes:**

- If you're not very experienced with breading and frying, increase the flour and butter to 3 tablespoons each. This will yield a thicker filling that's not as molten in the center, but will be easier to bread and less likely to burst while frying. Once you get the hang of it, decrease to 2 tablespoon each flour and butter for a very molten center.

**Ingredient Substitutions:**

- MAKE IT GLUTEN-FREE:
  - Swap the all-purpose flour in the sauce for any cup-for-cup gluten-free all purpose blend. Cook it with the butter for just 10 seconds, then cook with the milk only until simmered and thickened, about 1 minute. (These blends are often made up of starches that will break down from excess cooking, resulting in a thin filling.)
  - Swap the all-purpose flour and breadcrumbs for any gluten-free alternatives and proceed as usual.
- HAM: Swap the ham for finely diced cooked chicken, corn kernels, peas, or chopped cooked chorizo