INDIRECT · EASY

Whole roasted cauliflower on the kamado with saffron aioli

A whole cauliflower roasted indirect at 180°C: steam first to tame the core, then a deep sear and a spiced glaze. Golden outside, tender inside, with saffron aioli. Serves 4.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
15 min	60 min	4	180 °C

Ingredients

- **1 ud** large whole cauliflower (1.2-1.4 kg), tender leaves left on
- **60 ml** extra-virgin olive oil (for the glaze)
- **1 cdita** ground cumin
- **1 pizca** flaky salt and freshly ground black pepper
- **1 ud** egg yolk, room temperature (for the aioli)
- **1 ud** lemon (the zest and a squeeze of juice)
- **150 ml** vegetable stock or water (for the initial steam)
- **2 cdita** sweet smoked paprika (or hot, to taste)
- **3 ud** garlic cloves (1 for the glaze, 2 for the aioli)
- **1 pizca** saffron threads (a generous pinch, for the aioli)
- **150 ml** mild extra-virgin olive oil to build the aioli

Method

1 SET THE DEFLECTOR AND STABILISE 180°C

Light the charcoal, set the deflector to block direct heat and stabilise the chamber at 180°C with a reliable probe, not the dome thermometer. It takes 20-25 minutes to settle. Meanwhile, trim the cauliflower: remove the tough outer leaves leaving the tender ones, level the stem so it stands upright, and rinse it.

2 INITIAL STEAM IN A COVERED POT

Sit the cauliflower upright in the cast-iron pot and pour the stock into the base, no deeper than a finger. Cover and set the pot in the centre of the grate, over the deflector. Cook 10-15 minutes: the steam softens the dense core from inside without toasting anything. Check by piercing the stem with a knife; it should go in with little resistance.

3 MAKE THE SPICE GLAZE

While the steam works, mix the 60 ml of olive oil with the paprika, cumin, one grated garlic clove, salt and pepper into a loose red paste. Infuse the saffron too: crush it lightly and leave it in a tablespoon of warm water for 10 minutes, until it releases its colour and aroma for the aioli.

4 UNCOVER, GLAZE AND ROAST TO GOLDEN

Lift the lid and carefully brush the whole dome and crevices of the cauliflower with the glaze, letting it run between the florets. Return it uncovered and roast indirect for 45-50 minutes. The radiant heat caramelises the spices into a golden crust and browns the head evenly. Don't poke or move it for the first half hour.

5 BUILD THE SAFFRON AIOLI

In a mortar or bowl, pound the 2 garlic cloves with a pinch of salt into a paste. Add the yolk and the infused saffron with its water, and start pouring the mild olive oil in the thinnest stream, stirring constantly until it emulsifies and thickens. Finish with the lemon zest and a squeeze of juice. It should be dense and hold on the spoon.

6 CHECK DONENESS WITH THE PROBE, 90-93°C

Around the 45-minute mark, sink the probe into the heart of the stem: doneness sits between 90 and 93°C, when the centre is creamy and a knife slides in without resistance. If the surface browns too soon, drop to 170°C or tent it with foil for the final stretch. Pull the pot with gloves once it reaches the point.

7 REST, SERVE WHOLE AND CARVE

Let the cauliflower rest for 5 minutes: the residual heat finishes softening the centre and the juices settle. Carry it whole to the table in the pot itself or on a platter, sprinkle flaky salt and a little parsley if you like, and carve into wedges like a roast. Serve the saffron aioli in a separate bowl for dipping.

Editor's tips

- The initial steam isn't optional, it's what makes the centre tender. A whole cauliflower is a solid mass, and without those 10-15 minutes in a covered pot the surface scorches long before the heart softens. The steam penetrates the dense stem from inside while the exterior hasn't toasted yet, so when you uncover to brown you start from an almost-cooked core. Skip this step to save time and you end up with a cauliflower black outside and raw inside: the classic failure of roasting it whole in one go.
- Govern by the probe, not the clock. The cauliflower's size matters more than the minutes: a 1.2 kg head reaches the point sooner than a 1.5 kg one, and stem density varies from piece to piece. That's why the reliable figure is the core temperature, 90-93°C, not a fixed time. Sink the probe into the thickest part of the stem, not a floret, which heats faster and misleads. When a thin knife slides to the centre without resistance, it's done, whatever the clock says.
- If the aioli splits, don't bin it. The emulsion breaks when you pour the oil too fast or the garlic and yolk are at different temperatures. The fix is simple: put a fresh yolk (or a spoonful of the split aioli itself) in a clean bowl and

re-incorporate the broken mix in the thinnest stream, stirring constantly, as if it were the oil. It comes back together in a minute. To prevent it in the first place, have everything at room temperature and be patient with the oil stream early on: haste is the enemy of aioli.

Gear for this recipe

Big Green Egg Large
mikamado.es/en/kamados/big-green-egg-large

Carboext 100% Holm Oak Lump Charcoal, 15 kg Sack
mikamado.es/en/accesorios/carboext-encina-15kg

Onlyfire GCG-8552 Cooking System (2 grates + rack + 2 deflectors) for Large Kamado
mikamado.es/en/accesorios/onlyfire-gcg8552-sistema-coccion

Inkbird IBT-4XS Bluetooth thermometer
The tender point of the centre is decided by temperature, not the clock: the cauliflower's size changes the timing and the colour outside misleads. Sink the probe into the thickest part of the stem and aim for 90-93°C, when the heart is creamy but the head still holds together. A second channel watches the chamber at 180°C, more reliable than the dome thermometer, which reads the cupola's air.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/inkbird-ibt-4xs

Grill Heat Aid – Heat-Resistant Aramid/Kevlar BBQ Gloves
mikamado.es/en/accesorios/grill-heat-aid-guantes-bbq-resistentes-calor

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/coliflor-entera-asada-kamado

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