

LAMB MEATBALLS WITH TAHINI



Ingredients

Lamb meatballs

- 1 cup (2 ounces) crackers, Ritz or any cracker
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow or white onion, finely chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled, smashed, and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 pound ground lamb
- ½ cup (lightly packed) roughly chopped parsley leaves and tender stems
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon Kashmiri red chili powder (or ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Neutral oil, such as safflower or grapeseed, for brushing

Difficulty level: Moderate

Wine pairing:

A French pinot noir or a dolcetto from Northern Italy

Tahini sauce

- ½ cup well-stirred tahini
- ⅓ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely grated
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon (or more) kosher salt
- 4 to 5 tablespoons ice water

Red onion and parsley salad

- ½ medium red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- ¼ cup (lightly packed) torn parsley leaves
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon ground sumac
- ¼ teaspoon (or more) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar

Prep time

30 min., plus time to chill

Actual time

1 hr. 20 min.

Serves

4-6



Step 1

Make the lamb meatballs.

In a large bowl, crush the crackers with your fingers into coarse pieces, ranging in size from large cornflakes to panko-sized bits. Add ½ cup of water and mix with your hands until moistened and incorporated but still lumpy. Let rest for 5 minutes.

Step 2

In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, melt the butter. Sauté the onion, garlic, black pepper, coriander, and cumin, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes, until tender, translucent, and fragrant. Scrape into the bowl with the Ritz cracker mixture. Let mixture cool.

Step 3

To the Ritz cracker mixture, add the lamb, parsley, egg, turmeric, red chili powder, salt, and cinnamon. Using your hands, knead for 3 to 5 minutes until well combined, slightly sticky, and springy. Alternatively, mix the ingredients in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed for about 1 minute, until well combined and springy. Wrap and chill in the refrigerator for ideally 24 hours—if you're in a rush, you can shorten that to 3 hours. If you want to plan ahead, you can refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Step 4

Heat a grill to medium or a broiler to high with a rack 6 inches from the heat source. Portion the lamb mixture with a ¼ cup measure. You should get about 14 meatballs. Wet your hands, then roll the portions between your palms to form smooth balls. Rub or brush the meatballs all over with the oil.

Step 5

Grill or broil the meatballs, carefully flipping once with a spoon or offset spatula halfway through, for 16 to 18 minutes, until browned on all sides. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the meatball should register at least 155°F (It's okay if they are cooked to a higher temperature) or no longer look pink in the center when split in half. Let the meatballs rest for 5 minutes before serving. While they are resting, baste with the pan drippings.

While the meatballs rest, prepare the tahini sauce and red onion salad.

Step 1

In a medium bowl, whisk the tahini, lemon juice, garlic, oil, and salt until well combined. Whisk in 4 to 5 tablespoons of ice water until the consistency is smooth and as thick as pancake batter. Taste and add more salt or lemon juice if needed.

Make the red onion and parsley salad.

Step 1

In another medium bowl, massage the onion, parsley, lemon juice, sumac, sugar, and salt with your hands until the onions have wilted. Taste and add more salt if needed. Stir in the tomatoes.

I like to serve it with curry couscous and a cucumber yogurt salad.

Put meatballs on top of couscous and the sumac onion salad on the side. Pass the tahini sauce.