

Lamb Meatballs in Greek-Inspired Tomato Sauce

Servings: 4

Source: New York Times Dec. 22, 2013 Mark Bittman

Ingredients

- 1½ lbs. ground lamb
- 1 large egg
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ⅓ cup bread crumbs
- 3 tbsps chopped parsley
- 2 tbsps tomato paste
- 2 tbsps milk or water
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 to 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 medium green pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped
- ½ cup dry red wine or dry vermouth
- ½ cup water
- 1 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes in puree, see note
- ½ to 1 tsp garlic powder
- ⅓ cup pitted, chopped kalamata olives
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- ¼ to ½ tsp crushed red pepper
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ⅛ to ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 to 2 tsp sugar, optional
- salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. In a large bowl, blend the first 9 ingredients for the meatballs. Moisten our palms with water, and shape the mixture into meatballs about 1 inch in diameter.
2. In a 4 quart or larger cooker, heat 1 tbsp of the oil. Add the onions and green pepper, and cook over medium high heat, stirring frequently, until the onions begin to soften, about 1 minute.
3. Stir in the wine, scraping up any browned bits sticking to the bottom of the cooker. Boil until the wine is reduced by half, about 1 minute. Stir in the water, and add the meatballs in one

or two layers. Pour the tomatoes over the meatballs. (do not stir). Sprinkle on the garlic powder.

4. Lock the lid in place. Over high heat, bring to high pressure. Reduce the heat just enough to maintain high pressure, and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Turn off the heat. Quick-release the pressure by setting the cooker under cold running water. Remove the lid, tilting it away from you to allow the steam to escape.
6. Split a meatball in half to check for doneness. If necessary, cover the cooker, and simmer until done.
7. Gently stir in the olives, feta, parsley, crushed red pepper, oregano, cinnamon and a tbsp of olive oil, if needed, to give the sauce a rich finish. Simmer a few minutes. Season to taste with sugar, salt and pepper (go easy on the salt, as the olives and feta have plenty). Serve in shallow bowls, garnished with feta.

Notes

I don't like green pepper so I left it out.

If you don't have crushed tomatoes in puree you can substitute a 28-oz can of plum tomatoes, including liquid, combined with a 6-oz can of tomato paste.

I didn't use a pressure cooker. I made this in a big skillet, covered the meatballs with tomato sauce without stirring and let it simmer until meatballs were cooked through. This does not take long. A few minutes before serving I add the rest of the things as described.

I think this is good over something although it is probably fine alone. I used egg noodles because I had an open bag but any rice, pasta, polenta etc. would be great.

This has a very deep, interesting (in a good way!) taste. I consider it a keeper.