

Keftedes - Κεφτέδες (keftedes)



Greek meatballs made from ground beef or lamb, seasoned with herbs and spices, and typically served with a yogurt-based sauce.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	CUISINE
Serves 4	25 minutes	20 minutes	45 minutes	Greek

Ingredients

- 500 g (1 lb 2 oz) minced beef, or a mixture of beef and lamb
- 1 small onion, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1 large slice stale bread, crusts removed and soaked in water, then squeezed dry
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper



- ¼ tsp ground cumin
- 2 tbsp plain flour, plus extra for shaping
- 3 tbsp olive oil, for the pan-frying
- [For serving] 200 g (7 oz) Greek yoghurt
- [For serving] 1 tbsp lemon juice
- [For serving] 1 small garlic clove, finely grated
- [For serving] 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- [For serving] 1 pinch salt

Method

1. If serving the yoghurt sauce, stir together the Greek yoghurt, lemon juice, garlic, extra-virgin olive oil and salt in a small bowl. Chill while you make the keftedes so the flavours mellow.
2. Place the minced meat in a large bowl and add the grated onion, grated garlic, squeezed bread, egg, parsley, mint, oregano, salt, pepper and cumin.
3. Mix thoroughly with your hands for 2 to 3 minutes until the mixture becomes cohesive and slightly tacky; it should look evenly seasoned and hold together when pressed.
4. Sprinkle over the flour and mix briefly just until incorporated. Cover and rest for 10 minutes so the bread hydrates fully and the mixture firms up.
5. Lightly dust your hands with flour and shape the mixture into 16 to 18 small meatballs, about the size of a walnut. Set them on a tray and press each one very gently so they are not perfectly round; this helps them cook evenly.
6. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat to about 170°C (340°F) for 2 to 3 minutes, until shimmering but not smoking.
7. Add the keftedes in a single layer and fry for 8 to 10 minutes, turning them every 2 minutes, until browned all over and cooked through to the centre.
8. Lower the heat if they colour too quickly, so the outside becomes crisp without scorching and the inside stays juicy.
9. Transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper and rest for 2 minutes before serving.
10. Serve warm with the yoghurt sauce alongside.

To serve

Arrange the keftedes on a platter with the yoghurt sauce in a bowl for dipping, plus lemon wedges and warm bread. A crisp white wine or a light, dry rosé suits them well.

