

Lamb Meatballs with Feta and Lemon

Lorraine Wallace, 2015 Potluck

Yield: About 36 small meatballs (Use a 3T scoop to yield 1.5 to 2-inch meatballs)

LJW comment: I made a few mistakes but they came out great, so I would do it again. I intended to make half the meatballs, so I used 1" of ground lamb, but forgot to halve the rest of the meatball ingredients and used the entire amount of the meatball ingredients. I also forgot the water and lemon zest. I made the whole recipe of the sauce.

For the Weeders Potluck, I used 4 pounds of lamb and adjusted the other ingredients accordingly.

Meatballs

2 pounds ground lamb (I used only 1 pound)
1 large egg
1 1/4 cup Panko breadcrumbs
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
3/4 teaspoon table salt
Pinch of red pepper flakes (I use Aleppo pepper)
2 small garlic cloves, minced
3 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 tablespoons tomato paste
Zest of half a lemon

2 tablespoons olive oil

Sauce

1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
A couple glugs of red wine
1 28-ounce can of crushed or pureed tomatoes
1 teaspoon dried oregano
Zest of half a lemon
3/4 to 1 teaspoon table salt
Pinches of red pepper flakes (I use Aleppo pepper)

1/3 cup pitted, chopped kalamata olives
1 tablespoon thinly sliced mint leaves, plus more for garnish
2 tablespoons roughly chopped parsley, plus more for garnish
Juice of one lemon
1/4 cup crumbled feta, for garnish

Make meatballs: In a large bowl, combine all meatball ingredients, except the oil. Using wet hands, form mixture into small (1 1/2 to 2-inch diameter) meatballs.

Brown meatballs: Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add olive oil and heat it through. Evenly space meatballs in pan and very carefully turn and roll them so that all sides become brown. Don't worry if they don't remain perfectly round or if some pieces become stuck to the pan; they will deliciously infuse the sauce in a minute. Drain meatballs on a paper towel-lined plate.

[If you prefer not to fry your meatballs before cooking them in the sauce, you can cook them right in the sauce -- it will take about 10 minutes longer.]

Make sauce and finish cooking meatballs: Pour out all but 1 tablespoon fat from skillet and return to medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add wine and scrape up any bits stuck to the pan. Cook until the liquid almost disappears. Add tomatoes, oregano, lemon zest, salt, pepper flakes, olives, mint and parsley. Bring mixture to a simmer and return meatballs to the pan. Cover with a lid and cook at the lowest simmer for 20 to 24 minutes, until meatballs are cooked through. Squeeze lemon juice over meatballs and sauce.

Serve: Sprinkled with additional olives, feta and herbs. We had this with orzo and a salad.