

WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Little Lamb Meatballs

Greek mezes include both warm dishes and cold spreads, dips and salads. Miniature meatballs called *keftedes* are one of the most popular of these small plates. This version blends walnuts and rice with ground beef and lamb. The mixture allows the assertive flavor of the lamb to come through while keeping the dish leaner than usual. Tzatziki makes a delicious accompaniment (see related recipe at left).

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. ground lean beef
1/2 lb. ground lamb
2 slices firm white bread, crusts removed
1/2 cup cooked long-grain white rice
1/2 cup finely chopped yellow onion
1/4 cup ground walnuts
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 egg, beaten
1/2 tsp. sea salt
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions:

Preheat an oven to 375°F.

In a large bowl, combine the ground beef and lamb. Cut the bread into 1-inch pieces. In a small bowl, soak the bread in cold water just to cover until soft, about 1 minute, then drain and squeeze out as much of the water as possible. Add the bread to the meat. Add the rice, onion, walnuts, parsley, garlic, cinnamon, egg, salt and 4 or 5 grinds of pepper. Using a fork, mix until all the ingredients are well blended.

Rinse your hands with water but do not dry them. Shape the meat mixture into balls about 1 inch in diameter and arrange the meatballs in evenly spaced rows on a rimmed baking sheet. You should have 36 meatballs.

Bake for 10 minutes. Using tongs, turn the meatballs over and bake until browned on the exterior and no longer pink in the center, about 20 minutes more. Arrange on a platter and serve immediately. Serves 6 to 8.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Mediterranean Cooking*, by Charity Ferreira, Dana Jacobi & Carolyn Miller (Oxmoor House, 2008).