

Pistachio and Pomegranate Meatballs

Makes: 24-30 meatballs
Preparation time: 30 minutes
plus 30 minutes refrigeration
Cooking time: 15 minutes

کوفته پسته

Kufteh-ye pesteh-o anar

NOTE

Sadaf's California-made pomegranate molasses has an excellent balance of sweet and sour.

MEATBALLS

1 small onion, peeled and cut into 4
1½ cups pistachios or hazelnuts, shelled
¼ cup bread crumbs
2 cups chopped fresh parsley
1 cup chopped fresh tarragon
1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 teaspoons sea salt
2 pounds ground lamb (or ground chicken or turkey thighs; or boned and skinned ground fish fillets)
1 egg

COOKING

½ cup oil, butter, or ghee*

GLAZE

¾ cup pomegranate molasses
¼ cup honey or grape molasses
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

GARNISH

springs of basil, sprouts, mint
1 cup fresh pomegranate arils

1. To make the meatballs: Pulse all the ingredients, except the meat and egg, in a food processor until you have a **grainy** paste. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and add the meat and egg. Lightly knead with your hands for a few minutes (do not overmix). Cover and place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes and up to 24 hours.
2. Preheat the oven to 500°F (260°C). Generously oil a wide, nonreactive baking dish (wide enough to fit 24 meatballs, about 12x14-inch) and set aside.
3. Remove the paste from the refrigerator and shape into bite-sized balls (about 1½ tablespoons each). Place the meatballs in the baking dish and brush well with oil. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl combine all the ingredients for the glaze. It is important that you taste the glaze and be sure that it has a good balance between sweet and sour—add more honey if the pomegranate molasses you have used is too sour.
5. Reduce the oven to 400°F (200°C). Glaze the meatballs and bake for another 5 minutes to infuse them with the flavor of the pomegranate. Adjust seasoning to taste. If too sour add more honey; if too sweet add more pomegranate molasses. Keep warm in the oven until ready to serve.
6. Place the meatballs with its sauce in deep serving dish and garnish. *Nush-e jan!*

