

Skewered Ground Lamb Kabab

Makes 6 servings
Preparation time: 30 minutes
plus 30 minutes resting
Cooking time: 10 minutes

کباب کوبیده

Kabab-e kubideh

POMEGRANATE BASTE VARIATION

Mix together 1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses, 1 teaspoon thyme, ¼ cup olive oil

NOTE

Keep the kabab paste cool at all times—before, during, and after skewering. If cooking outside be sure to keep the paste in a cooler.

The quantity of onion to meat is an essential factor in preventing the meat from falling off the skewer while cooking. For upscaling, use 4 medium yellow onions for 5 pounds of meat and 8 medium yellow onions for 10 pounds of meat.

LAMB KABAB

2 pounds twice-ground lamb shoulder, beef (85%), or turkey thigh
2 teaspoons sea salt
2 teaspoons fresh ground black pepper
½ teaspoon ground saffron dissolved in 2 tablespoons rose water
¼ teaspoon turmeric
2 tablespoons sumac powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 medium yellow onions, finely grated

2 cloves garlic, peeled and grated
Zest of 1 lime

BASTE

½ cup salted butter or olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh lime juice

COOKING AND GARNISH

14 flat ¾-inch skewers
1 package (12 ounces) lavash bread
½ cup sumac powder
2 limes, cut in half and Persian basil

1. To make the meat paste, in a warm, wide skillet, combine all the kabab ingredients. Knead with your hands for about 5 minutes. Cover the paste and let stand for at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours in the refrigerator.

2. Start charcoal at least 30 minutes before you want to cook and let it burn until the coals are glowing evenly. For this kabab, you want the coals to be as high as possible, close to the meat, and at their hottest. Do not spread the charcoal thin. If you are using an indoor grill make sure it is preheated and very hot.

3. Using damp hands, divide the meat paste into equal lumps about the size of small oranges. Shape each into a 5-inch-long sausage and mold it firmly around a flat, sword-like skewer. Arrange on a baking sheet, separated from each other. Cover and keep in a cool place.

4. For the baste, melt the butter in a small saucepan and add the lime juice. Keep warm. Spread lavash bread on a serving platter.

5. Arrange the skewers on the fire 3 inches above the coals (bricks on either side make good platforms; keep in mind that the ground meat should not touch the grill). *After a few seconds, turn the meat gently to help it attach to the skewers and to prevent it from falling off* (these first few seconds are important for cooking skewered ground kabab).

6. Grill the meat for 3 to 5 minutes turning frequently. Baste just before removing from the fire. Avoid overcooking. The meat should be seared on the outside, juicy and tender on the inside.

7. Place all the kabab skewers on the lavash bread platter. Keep on skewers until ready to serve and cover with lavash bread to keep warm. Loosen the meat from each skewer and slide the meat off using a piece of bread. Sprinkle with sumac and lime juice to taste. Serve with fresh basil and yogurt and cucumber dip. *Nush-e Jan!*

VARIATION

Ground Chicken Kabab—In a food processor, place 2 pounds chicken thighs, 1 small onion (peeled and chopped), 3 cloves garlic (peeled), zest of 2 limes, 2 teaspoons fine-grind sea salt, 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, ¼ teaspoon ground saffron dissolved in 1 tablespoon rose water, and 1 tablespoon olive oil. Pulse for a few minutes until you have a thick paste. Do not overmix. Transfer to a glass container. Cover and allow to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Continue with step 2.

