



Sweet and Sour Soup

Makes 6 servings
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 2 hours 10 minutes

آش مین

Osh-e miveh

VEGETARIAN VARIATION

Eliminate the meat from the ingredients and replace it with 1 pound firm tofu, water squeezed out, combined with 1½ cups ground walnuts, 2 eggs, 1 cup bread crumbs, and ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes. Add to the rest of the ingredients in step 3 to make the tofu balls. Add tofu balls in step 5 and simmer for 10 minutes uncovered.

NOTE

If using dried herbs, place a sieve in a bowl of lukewarm water and soak the dried herbs for 20 minutes. Remove the sieve from the bowl and use the herbs.

BROTH

¼ cup oil
2 onions, peeled and thinly sliced
1 teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon freshly black ground pepper
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ cup yellow split peas
10 cups water
1 cup chopped fresh parsley
½ cup chopped spring onions
½ cup chopped fresh beet leaves
¼ cup fresh chopped mint or 1 tablespoon dried
1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 cup dried pitted prunes
1 cup dried apricots
½ cup rice
¼ cup chopped walnuts

¼ cup grape molasses* or sugar
¼ cup red wine vinegar

MEATBALLS

1 onion, peeled and grated
1 pound ground lamb or chicken
1 teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

GARNISH (NA'NA DAGH)

2 tablespoons oil
1 large onion, peeled and finely sliced
5 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
½ teaspoon turmeric
2 tablespoons dried mint flakes, crushed

1. To make the broth: Heat the oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat until hot. Add the onion and sauté until golden brown. Add the salt, pepper, and turmeric. Add the split peas and sauté for 2 minutes. Pour in the water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, cover and simmer for 25, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the parsley, spring onions, beet leaves, mint, and cilantro to the pot. Cover and simmer for 25 minutes longer.
3. To make the meatballs: In a mixing bowl, combine the grated onion, ground lamb, salt, pepper, turmeric, cinnamon, and parsley. Knead lightly (do not overmix) and with moist hands shape into meatballs the size of walnuts, and add them to the simmering broth. Bring back to a boil, add the prunes, and apricots to the pot. Partially cover and simmer over low heat, for 25 minutes longer.
4. Add the rice and walnuts. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes longer.
5. Mix the grape molasses and vinegar together and stir into the soup. Simmer uncovered for 10 minutes longer. Season to taste and add more molasses or vinegar if needed. Keep warm until ready to serve.
6. To prepare the garnish: Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a medium-sized skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until golden brown. Add the turmeric, give it a stir, and remove from heat. Crumble the dried mint flakes in the palm of your hand and add it to the skillet. Stir well and set aside.
7. Pour the soup into a tureen and garnish. Stir the garnish in just before ladling soup into individual bowls. Serve with Persian flat bread. *Nush-e Jan!*