

Sour Meatballs

Turkish sour meatballs (ekşili köfte) with bulgur, chickpeas and tender beef in tangy tomato sauce. Authentic comfort food recipe.

30 min

PREP

50 min

COOK

1h 20min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1.1 lb stew meat
- 0.5 cup chickpea
- 1 cup cracked wheat
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 0.5 tbsp pepper paste
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp butter
- 0.5 lemon
- 0.5 tbsp dry mint
- 0.5 tbsp salt

Instructions

- 1 Cook the meat and chickpeas**

Place 1.1 lb beef and 0.5 cup chickpeas in pressure cooker with 4 cups water. Cook at high pressure for 35 minutes, then allow natural pressure release for 10 minutes.
- 2 Prepare the bulgur mixture**

Combine 1 cup bulgur with 1 cup warm water in a bowl. Let stand for 15 minutes until water is completely absorbed and bulgur is tender.
- 3 Add 1 tablespoon tomato paste, 0.5 tablespoon black pepper, 2 tablespoons flour, and 0.5 teaspoon salt to the soaked bulgur. Knead with your hands for 3 minutes until mixture holds together when squeezed and forms a cohesive dough.**

4 **Form the bulgur balls**

Wet your hands with cold water and roll small portions of bulgur mixture into marble-sized balls, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. Place finished balls on a plate and keep your hands damp throughout the process.

5 **Cook the bulgur balls**

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil over high heat. Add bulgur balls and cook for 8-10 minutes until they float to the surface and are firm to the touch.

6 **Make the sauce**

Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium heat until melted and foaming. Add remaining 2 tablespoons tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly, until paste darkens and becomes fragrant.

7 Remove skillet from heat and stir in 0.5 tablespoon dried mint and 0.5 tablespoon lemon juice. Season with salt to taste and mix well.

8 **Combine and serve**

Drain bulgur balls and add to the skillet along with the cooked meat and chickpeas. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the meat cooking liquid and simmer over medium-low heat for 3 minutes to blend flavors and heat through.

Tips

Soak bulgur in lukewarm water rather than hot water to prevent it from becoming mushy and maintain the proper texture for shaping.

Wet your hands with cold water when forming bulgur balls to prevent the mixture from sticking and ensure uniform, smooth shapes.

Cook tomato and pepper pastes in butter for 2-3 minutes to eliminate raw flavors and develop deeper, more complex tastes.

Test one bulgur ball first by dropping it into boiling water - if it holds together, your mixture is ready; if not, add more flour.

Reserve some cooking liquid from the pressure cooker to thin the sauce if needed during the final combining step.

Add dried mint off the heat to preserve its bright flavor and prevent it from becoming bitter from overcooking.

Let the dish rest for 10 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to meld and the sauce to thicken slightly.