

Turkish Keskek A Traditional Wedding Stew

Authentic Turkish Keskek - traditional wedding stew with wheat and meat. UNESCO-protected recipe with step-by-step instructions for this ceremonial dish.

20 min

PREP

50 min

COOK

1h 10min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2 cup wheat
- 0.6 lb lamb
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 onion
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

1 Prepare the wheat

Rinse 2 cups wheat thoroughly under cold running water until the water runs clear. Place in a large bowl, cover with cold water by 2 inches, and soak overnight at room temperature.

2 Prepare the meat

Cut 0.6 lb lamb into 2-inch chunks, trimming away any excess fat. Season all sides with 1 tsp salt and let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes.

3 Start the stew

Drain the soaked wheat completely and place in a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven. Add the seasoned lamb chunks and 1 onion. Pour in 6 cups hot water to cover by 1 inch.

4 Bring to a rolling boil over high heat, then immediately reduce heat to low to maintain a gentle simmer. Cover and cook for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes to prevent sticking.

5 Shred the meat

Remove the lamb pieces with tongs and transfer to a bowl. Using two forks, shred the meat into fine threads

while it's still warm and tender.

6 Return the shredded lamb to the pot and stir to combine with the wheat. Season with 1 tsp pepper and additional salt to taste.

7 **Continue cooking**

Cover and simmer on low heat for 1 hour 30 minutes, stirring every 20 minutes and adding hot water as needed to maintain a thick porridge consistency.

8 Using a wooden spoon, vigorously stir and mash the mixture until it reaches a smooth, creamy consistency with no distinct wheat grains visible.

9 **Make the spiced butter**

Heat 1 tbsp butter in a small pan over low heat until melted. Add the red pepper flakes and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant and the butter turns slightly red.

10 Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve hot in bowls, drizzled with the spiced butter mixture.

Tips

Soak the wheat overnight in cold water to ensure even cooking and prevent tough, chewy grains that won't properly integrate with the meat.

Use bone-in meat cuts like lamb shoulder or chicken thighs to add depth of flavor and natural gelatin that enhances the dish's creamy texture.

Cook on the lowest possible heat setting to prevent scorching and allow the flavors to develop slowly over the extended cooking time.

Stir the mixture every 15-20 minutes and scrape the bottom of the pot to prevent sticking and ensure even cooking throughout.

Reserve some cooking liquid from both the meat and wheat to adjust consistency during the final stages of preparation.

Use a hand blender or wooden spoon to achieve the traditional smooth texture, but avoid over-processing which can make the mixture gluey.

Taste and adjust seasoning near the end of cooking, as the flavors concentrate significantly during the long cooking process.

Prepare the butter and red pepper garnish just before serving to maintain the vibrant color and fresh flavor of the spice mixture.