

Keftedakia (Greek-Style Meatballs)

By Gus Constantellis

 Servings: 4-6 (makes about 24 meatballs)

 Total: 45 mins

- 1 pound ground beef, preferably 80 percent lean
- 1 medium yellow onion (8 ounces), grated or pulsed in a food processor
- 4 garlic cloves, minced or finely grated
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup plain breadcrumbs or panko
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves and tender stems
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon milk (any kind)
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Neutral oil, such as canola or avocado, for frying
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour, plus more as needed
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

Step 1

In a large bowl, combine the beef, onion, garlic, egg, breadcrumbs, parsley, mint, vinegar, milk, salt and pepper, and gently mix to combine. Do not overmix, or the meatballs will be tough. Set a large plate nearby.

Step 2

Set a large (12- to 14-inch) skillet with 3-inch sides over medium heat, add enough oil to come halfway up the sides, and heat until the oil registers 375 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.

Step 3

While the oil is heating up, use a 1-tablespoon measuring spoon to measure out the mixture into roughly 2-tablespoon portions (about 1 ounce each), and shape each into a ball. (You may want to set a bowl of water near your workspace and periodically dip your hands in it to prevent the meatball mixture from sticking to them.) Transfer the shaped meatballs to the prepared plate.

Step 4

Set a wire rack over a large sheet pan. Place the flour in a small bowl and, working with one meatball at a time, lightly roll each meatball in the flour, shaking off excess. Return the coated meatball to the same plate. (As you work, you may need to add more flour.)

Step 5

When the oil is ready, working in batches to avoid overcrowding, carefully slide the meatballs into the hot oil and fry until browned all over and cooked through, gently turning them to ensure even cooking, about 6 minutes total. (The meatballs should register 160 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.)

Step 6

Transfer the cooked meatballs to the prepared wire rack and repeat with the remaining meatballs.

Step 7

Serve hot or warm, with lemon wedges, for squeezing over.

Substitutions

Ground beef >> ground lamb, chicken or turkey (preferably dark meat), or plant-based ground meat alternatives.

Fresh herbs >> Use dried, but about half the amount.

Dislike mint? >> Use dill.

Have just one of the herbs? >> Use that instead.

Variations

If baking or air frying the meatballs, you do not need to roll them in the flour.

To bake the meatballs: Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 425 degrees. Line a large sheet pan with foil and lightly grease it with a neutral oil, such as canola or vegetable. (You can also skip the foil and just grease the sheet pan.) Arrange the meatballs, spacing them 1 to 2 inches apart. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, or until the meatballs are uniformly browned and reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.

To air fry the meatballs: Preheat the air fryer on the air fry setting to 375 degrees. Working in batches to avoid overcrowding, air fry the meatballs for about 8 minutes, turning them over halfway through, or until generously browned and reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.

