

Moroccan Meatballs in Tomato Sauce



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Serves 4

Prep time: 25min

Cook time: 45min

Total time: 1h 10min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Category: Meat

Cuisine: Arab

This recipe makes 35 walnuts-sized meatballs. They can be prepared right away or you refrigerate them over night. They also freeze very well. Put them into the freezer for a couple of hours, together with the plate. Once frozen, transfer the meatballs into freezer bags. They can be stored for up to three months. When you want to cook them, remove the meatballs from the freezer bag and arrange them onto a plate so that they are not touching each other. Leave them in the refrigerator over night to thaw and proceed according to the recipe.

I like to serve them sprinkled with fresh mint and cilantro and slivered almonds. They go well with couscous or bulghur wheat.

For the meatballs:

Ingredients

450g minced beef
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove minced
1 cm ginger root, peeled and grated
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

In a bowl mix together meat, onion and garlic. Add salt, ginger and spices and mix with your hands until well incorporated. Form the mixture into little meatballs, about the size of walnuts. Put the meatballs onto a large plate lined with aluminium foil.

For the tomato sauce:

Ingredients

1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1/2 teaspoon coriander seeds

1/4 teaspoon fennel seeds
pinch of dried chili flakes
1 purple onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove minced
1 cm ginger root, peeled and grated
800g plum tomatoes, (tinned)
1 tablespoon tomato paste
200ml water
1/2 tablespoon sugar
some salt and pepper
some fresh mint and cilantro, to serve
30g slivered almonds, to serve

Directions

Roughly crush the cumin, coriander and fennel seeds in a pestle and mortar. Add chili flakes and set aside.

In a large non-stick frying pan, heat a tablespoon of olive oil and fry the meatballs until golden brown on all sides. If necessary, fry them in batches so you don't overcrowd the pan. Remove from pan with a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the crushed spices in the same pan and fry for two minutes, then add onion, garlic and ginger. Cook until the onion becomes translucent. Add tomato paste and tinned tomatoes, water and sugar. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for 10 minutes. Then return meatballs to the pan and cook for another 20 minutes, until the sauce is thickened.