Tomato Bulgur Soup with Tiny Beef Meatballs

About 9 cups (2.1 liters); 4 servings · Active 25 min · Total 1 hr

Skills: Confident beginner

Ingredients

- 10 1/2 oz ground beef (300 g)
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup plain dry breadcrumbs (20 g)
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley (8 g), divided
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml)
- 1 small onion, finely diced (100 g)
- 2 medium carrots, coarsely grated (150 g)
- 1 can crushed tomatoes (14 oz/400 g)
- 4 cups low-sodium beef stock (960 ml)
- 1/2 cup medium bulgur wheat (80 g)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (1 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

4-quart (4-liter) saucepan with lid, Mixing bowl, Instant-read thermometer, Wide-mouth food flask for carrying

Allergens

Egg, Wheat; check stock and breadcrumbs for additional allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Beat the egg in the bowl, stir in the breadcrumbs and leave for 3 minutes. Add the beef, half the parsley, half the salt and all the pepper. Mix just until combined, then shape into 24 small meatballs about 1 inch (2.5 cm) across. Keep chilled while preparing the base.

2. Heat the oil in the saucepan over medium heat. Cook the onion for 6 minutes. Add the carrot and cook for 3 minutes, stirring.

3. Add the tomatoes, stock, oregano and remaining salt. Bring to a simmer and stir in the bulgur. Cook gently for 5 minutes.

4. Carefully add the meatballs to the simmering soup. Partly cover and simmer for 10–12 minutes, stirring very gently after the first 3 minutes. Check that the bulgur is tender and the largest meatballs reach 160°F/71°C.

5. Stir in the remaining parsley. Add a little boiling water if the soup has become too thick. Serve immediately, or bring the entire soup to 165°F/74°C before transferring to a preheated food flask that maintains 140°F/60°C or above until eating.

A spoonable meal for a short break

Make the meatballs small enough to fit comfortably on your actual eating spoon. Carry the spoon separately in a clean wrapper so the meal does not depend on the break room having cutlery.

A useful detail

Fine couscous is not a direct substitute for bulgur in this simmered soup. It has a different cooking time and would give the broth a different texture.

Keep it well

Cool leftovers promptly in shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Store at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days, or freeze for 2 months. Reheat to 165°F/74°C, adding water to loosen the bulgur. Carry chilled with two cold sources if you cannot maintain safe hot holding; refrigerate and reheat at work.