Lamb Meatballs with Tomato Couscous

12 lamb meatballs; 2 bowls of 6 meatballs, half the tomato sauce and half the couscous · Active 40 min · Total 1 hr 10 min

Skills: Beginner with ordinary kitchen equipment

Ingredients

- 9 oz raw ground lamb (250 g)
- 1 large egg, beaten (50 g edible)
- 3 tablespoons plain dry breadcrumbs (20 g)
- 1/2 small onion, finely grated (50 g)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (6 g), divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (1 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper (0.3 g)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil (10 ml/about 9 g)
- 3/4 can crushed tomatoes with juice (300 g)
- 1/2 cup water for sauce (120 ml)
- Generous 1/2 cup fine quick-soaking couscous (100 g dry)
- 1/2 cup boiling water for couscous (120 ml), or packet-required amount
- 3 tablespoons chopped parsley (10 g)

Set out

28 cm/11-inch deep skillet with lid, Mixing bowl, Grater, Heatproof bowl and cover for couscous, Kettle or small saucepan, Fork, Tongs, Kitchen scale, Measuring jug, Food thermometer, 2 serving bowls

Allergens

Egg, Wheat; check breadcrumb labels for milk or other added allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Mix lamb, beaten egg, breadcrumbs, grated onion, half the garlic, cumin, pepper and half the salt until just combined. Weigh the finished mixture and divide into 12 equal portions, about 31 g each. Roll compact balls about 1 1/2 inches (4 cm) across. Wash hands and raw-meat utensils.

2. Heat oil in the deep skillet over medium heat. Brown meatballs for 6–8 minutes, turning gently; they need not be fully cooked yet. Add remaining garlic to an open part of the pan for 30 seconds, then pour in tomatoes, sauce water and remaining salt.

3. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover loosely and cook for 12–15 minutes, turning once, until thick centers reach at least 160°F/71°C. Add a small splash of water if the sauce catches before the centers finish.

4. Meanwhile put fine couscous in the heatproof bowl. Pour over the measured boiling water or the packet-required amount, cover and stand for the packet time, usually 5–10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and fold in parsley.

5. Divide all couscous between 2 bowls and top each with 6 meatballs and half the tomato sauce. Serve promptly.

A useful kitchen skill

Browning a meatball is a surface step; a thermometer establishes when its ground-meat center is cooked.

A useful detail

The nutrition estimate uses the USDA generic raw ground-lamb composition rather than inventing a lean percentage. The couscous is weighed dry, and its full tomato sauce is included. A different lamb fat content changes the estimate.

Keep it well

Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers at 40°F/4°C or below within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Use within 3 days. Reheat the portion needed to 165°F/74°C throughout, adding water to couscous if needed and checking meatball centers. Freeze for up to 2 months; thaw in the refrigerator.