



## Spiced Lamb Meatballs with Pine Nuts and Fresh Herb Couscous

This dish was created with the spicy notes of Red Zinfandel wine in mind. A perfect melding of the spice and fruit components of the Zin with the exotic flavors of cumin, ginger and more.

### Ingredients

#### Meatballs:

- 2 1/2 cups (pressed down lightly), 1/2 inch-cubed fresh bread (about 4 slices, crust trimmed)
- 2 1/3 cups chicken stock, divided
- 1 lb ground lamb
- 3 large cloves garlic, finely minced or grated
- 1/2 cup red onion, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tsp fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 3 tsp Mid-Eastern spice mix (recipe for Spice Mix follows)
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp kosher salt or 1/2 tsp table salt
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1-1/2 Tbsp flour
- 2 tsp Mid-Eastern spice mix (see recipe below)
- salt and pepper, to taste

#### Couscous:

- 1-1/2 cups water
- 1 scant cup couscous
- 1 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 2 Tbsp fresh chives, snipped
- 1 tsp fresh lemon peel, grated
- 2 Tbsp lightly toasted pine nuts

#### Preparation

Place the bread cubes in a bowl and sprinkle 1/3 cup of chicken stock over them. (The rest of the stock is for the sauce.) Toss to coat evenly with your hands working the stock into the bread, let sit for 5 minutes.

Squeeze out and discard any excess stock, and put bread in a bowl with the lamb, garlic, red onion, parsley, thyme, 3 tsp Mid-Eastern spice mix (recipe below), egg and salt and combine thoroughly. Shape into 12- 1 ½ to 2-inch balls.

Heat the olive oil in a 10" stainless steel skillet till hot over medium high heat, add the meatballs and cook, gently turning to brown all sides. Don't overcook; you will be simmering them for another 10 minutes in the sauce. Take the skillet off the heat and remove the meatballs to a 3" to 5" deep saucepan or casserole just big enough to hold them all in one layer. Leave 2 Tbsp of fat in the skillet. If there is excess, remove it with a spoon and discard.

Put the skillet back on the heat; add the shallots and sauté over medium heat for a few minutes scraping up any brown bits on the bottom of the pan. Add the flour, stirring well with a whisk, then add the remaining 2 tsp Mid-Eastern spice mix and cook for 1 minute more.

2. Heat the stock. Slowly whisk in the hot stock. Simmer for a few minutes till slightly thickened and add the meatballs. Cover and cook at a low simmer for 5 minutes, then turn the meatballs and cook 5 minutes more. Taste the sauce and add salt and pepper if desired and serve immediately or take off the lid, cool completely and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Reheat gently and serve hot.

While it is cooking make the couscous by bringing the water to a boil and adding the couscous, herbs and lemon peel. Stir and then reduce the heat to a very low simmer for 1 minute.

Cover and let sit for 5 minutes. Fluff gently with a large fork and sprinkle with the pine nuts.

### **Mid-Eastern Spice Mix**

2-1/2 tsp ground coriander seed

2-1/2 tsp ground cumin

2 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cardamom

1 tsp ground black pepper

1/2 tsp ground allspice

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1/8 tsp ground clove

1/8 tsp cayenne

Mix well and store in an airtight jar. Make sure your spices are fresh...if they don't have a strong scent, they are probably too old.