

09/14/09 - Leek Kufte

Kufte de Prassa, Leek and Ground Beef Patties

Somewhere between a meatball and patty is a *kufte*. Made with ground beef, they are light and fluffy with a delicate crisp exterior, and redolent with the taste of autumn leeks. Serve this recipe as one of the starters, *Simanim*, for a traditional Jewish New Years celebration. *Kufte* can be part of an appetizer buffet, or individually plated with a lemon wedge garnish and perhaps a dollop of hummus.

You can make the *kufte* that morning, refrigerate, and then reheat in a 350°F oven for 15 minutes before serving. *Kufte* may also be made a week ahead and frozen in an airtight container. Defrost in the refrigerator the night before and reheat as indicated. Serve hot.

This makes about 48 *kufte*, two, or three per person. Leftovers are delicious the next day. Serve with rice and salad.

Patties

8 large leeks

2 pounds ground beef, preferably chuck

1 small bunch parsley, minced

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoons sea salt, divided

2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper

¾ cup Panko bread crumbs

3-4 extra large eggs

Coating

1 cup flour

1 teaspoon salt

2-3 extra large eggs

Safflower oil for frying

Lemon wedges for garnish (optional)

Cut off dark green ends of leeks, leaving only about three to four inches of tender looking green. Cut off tips of white ends with the little beards. Make a slit lengthwise, but not all the way through, so that you can open them up and wash out all dirt and sand under the kitchen faucet. Clean them carefully as dirt will tend to get way inside in every layer. So not separate layers all the way as it makes them harder to dice.

Finely, chop leeks and place in a medium saucepan. Barely cover with water and bring to a boil. Cook until tender, for about 20 minutes. Drain any excess water, and let leeks cool completely in pan uncovered. Squeeze out any excess liquid from leeks with your hands. Place them in a glass bowl, cover and refrigerate. You can do this a day ahead. The 8 leeks will reduce to a surprisingly small amount.

Combine steamed leeks, ground beef, Panko, parsley, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper, in a medium bowl. Add 2 eggs one at a time as you check for texture then add the third. The mixture should be sticky enough to hold together in small balls. Lay out a sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil about 2-3 feet long. Form golf balls size balls and then flatten them into patties and place on the prepared foil.

Mix flour with 1 teaspoon of salt on a plate. Lightly dredge each *Kufte* in seasoned flour and set them back on foil. Beat remaining three eggs in a shallow dish and set next to stove. Place a large plate with paper towel for absorbing oil from the fried *kufte* next to stove.

Preheat a 12 inch sauté pan, (not non stick) on medium high heat. When pan is hot, add oil a little less than 1/4 inch deep. (Adding the oil once the pan is hot yields better frying results.) Dip each flour-coated *kufte* in beaten egg and then fry, until they are golden brown, about 2 minutes per side, turning only once. Do not overcrowd pan. Using tongs, place *kufte* on prepared paper towel. Repeat with remaining *kufte*s until finished.

If oil level gets low, add more from the side of the pan. Keep a close eye on the temperature so the oil doesn't get too hot or *kufte* too dark. If the *kufte*s start to fry a lot faster or your oil is turning dark, or smoking, your oil is too hot. I change the oil

after two pans full.

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