

<b>09/14/09 - Leek Kufte</b>
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### 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 for a traditional Jewish New Years celebration. They 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° 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 of ground beef, preferably chuck

1 small bunch of parsley, minced

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoons sea salt, divided

2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup panko bread crumbs

3-4 large eggs

#### Coating

1 cup of flour

1 teaspoon salt

2-3 large eggs

Safflower oil for frying

Lemon wedges for garnish (optional)

Cut off the dark green ends of the leeks, leaving only about three to four inches of the more tender looking green. Cut off the tip of the white end with the little beard. 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.

Finely chop the leeks and place in a medium saucepan. Barely cover with water and cook, until tender, for about 15 minutes. Drain any excess water, and let them cool completely in the pan uncovered. Squeeze out any excess liquid from the 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, pepper, and cumin 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 the flour with ground cumin and 1 teaspoon of salt on a plate. Lightly dredge each Kufte in seasoned flour and set them back on the aluminum foil. Beat the remaining three eggs in a shallow dish and set next to the stove. Place a large plate with paper towel for absorbing oil from the fried kufte next to the stove.

Preheat a 12 inch sauté pan, (not non stick) on medium high heat. When the 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 the pan. Using tongs, place kufte on the prepared paper towel. Repeat with the remaining kuftes until finished.

If the 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 the kufte too dark. If the kuftes 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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