

02/05/12 - Swarma

Swarma is an extremely flavorful, spicy, Israeli, Middle Eastern masterpiece of a sandwich. You may think that this is something you can only eat at a restaurant or swarma counter, but I beg to differ. Tonight I had my Superbowl inspiration to



Starting with the Superbowl the late winter early spring calendar has lots of events such as the Academy Awards, which are perfect opportunities to invite casual company over to eat and socialize.



Cusinart makes a little vertical rotisserie oven that is sold as a device for roasting one chicken at a time. Some clever person at Cusinart included different tools to accommodate kabobs and also one gadget with straight vertical needle-like extensions coming out of the base. I thought this attachment would be perfect for layering tender pieces of turkey thigh layered with sheets of lamb fat to roast for Israeli style schwarma.

Schwarma is typically served with Laffa bread, pita, or French baguette, hummus, tahini sauce, Israeli salad and fried peppers and onion. Many schwarma bars also include, pickles, shredded cabbage, hot peppers i.e. pepperoncinis, pickled jalapeños, fried eggplant, and Turkish salad. Be creative and include lots of accompaniments. Tonight I made my own Laffa bread and tahini sauce. I sautéed onions and peppers until very caramelized. You could make it really simple and buy everything that goes with the schwarma, leaving only the meat to prepare. I recommend purchasing the meat the day before and marinating it overnight for the best flavor. Enjoy the party.

Serves 4 to 6

3 pounds boneless, skinless turkey thighs

1 pound lamb fat in thin large slices, about 3 to 5 inches square (you can piece

them)

1/ 2 cup fresh squeezed lime juice (lemon juice can be substituted)

1 large brown onion

1 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro (parsley may be substituted)

2 large cloves garlic minces

1 jalapeño pepper seeded and minced

1 tablespoon sumac

1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper

2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon allspice

1 and 1/ 2 tablespoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon salt (if you are using kosher turkey you may omit the salt)

1/ 2 tablespoon turmeric

1 teaspoon cardamom

2 tablespoons olive oil

Open the turkey thighs and cut them in approximately 5 inch by 5 inch squares.



They don't have to be exact. I found that each turkey thigh made 2 slices for layering. Prepare the lamb fat slices to measure about the same size as the turkey slices. Peel and slice onion in half, then slice each half into thin slices again. Mix



In another medium bowl combine the rest of the dry spices. Begin to layer the turkey thigh slices with first the onion mix and then dry spice mix layer by layer. Drizzle olive oil on top of meat and place lamb fat slices on top of everything. Give the whole thing a turn or two with your hands to distribute all the flavors, then, cover and



To cook schwarma on the vertical rotisserie, start with a layer of lamb fat, then, two layers of turkey thigh spread out and continue layering, finishing with a layer of lamb fat.



Place roasting rack on drip pan close rotisserie oven door and set temperature for 400° F for 2 hours. You may find that it appears done in 1 hour and 45 minutes or





When layering meat onto rotisserie many of the onions from the marinade will fall off, it is ok to leave a few clinging to meat. Don't throw out marinade. I added another sliced onion to it, plus red and green pepper julienne and sautéed it until





The big question is what to do if you don't own one of these handy dandy little counter-top ovens? I think a vertical chicken roaster (Spanec) in a roasting pan to catch drippings might work in a regular oven. Or spread the raw turkey thighs out in

a roaster and roasted in a 400° F, oven might work as well. Let me know what you improvise with. One more thought, if after slicing off a few layers for sandwiches, the inside may appear not totally cooked, simply place the rotisserie, back in the oven and turn it back on for another hour in order to finish roasting the inside layer or crisp it up some.

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