

Recipe: Vegan keftedes | Greek / Cypriot meatballs

All measurements are level, using standardised measuring spoons and cups. Be precise!

This recipe makes a lot. Enough for 6 to 8 people. If you're not hosting dinner or a party, you could halve the recipe, but personally I just like to make a big batch and keep half in the fridge for another day!

Ingredients

- 1 large onion, finely diced
- 400 g oyster mushrooms
- 1 bunch (100g) fresh, flat-leaf parsley, *thickest stalks discarded*
- 500 g floury potatoes, rinsed
- 1 can of red kidney beans, drained
- 1 can of chopped tomatoes, not drained
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried mint
- 1 tsp dried sage
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 4 tbsp (70g) tomato puree, *AKA tomato concentrate*
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp fine salt
- black pepper, to taste
- 6 tbsp olive oil, for sautéing
- vegetable oil for frying

Requirements

- A large and a medium-sized frying pan.
- Standardised measuring cups and spoons
- Large mixing bowl or casserole dish
- Grater with small holes option
- Masher

Instructions

1. Start prepping: finely dice the onion and set aside. Shred the oyster mushrooms with a fork and then dice the shreds (we don't want long, stringy threads in the meatballs) and set aside. Chop the parsley very finely. Finely grate the potatoes (no need to peel them) and squeeze out as much water as possible (discard the liquid).
2. Sauté the mushrooms and onions in separate pans on a medium heat, stirring regularly: use a large pan with 4 tbsp olive oil for the mushrooms, a medium-sized pan with 2 tbsp olive oil for the onions. When the mushrooms start releasing their moisture, add the 1 tsp paprika and 1 tsp dried sage. When the onions go translucent, add the 3 minced cloves of garlic. When the onions start to become lightly golden brown, remove them from the heat. Then add 2 tbsp soy sauce to the mushrooms and cook a little longer until the soy sauce is incorporated, then remove them from the heat, too.
3. In a large mixing bowl, add all the prepared ingredients from above and all the remaining ingredients. Mix well with your clean hands. You should now be able to form balls that hold together and are not too dry (crumbly) or too wet. If, for whatever reason, the mixture is too loose and wet, you can add more breadcrumbs. But it should be fine if you've followed the recipe closely :)
4. Shape the mixture into ping-pong sized balls and then roll them into an ovular shape in your palm. They should all be the same size so that they fry evenly.
5. Fill a frying pan with oil (about one third full) and get it hot on a medium heat. If you are impatient and heat it on high, you risk burning the bottom of the meatballs before the middle has cooked. Fry the keftedes on both sides until dark reddish-brown. Place them on kitchen paper or a clean kitchen cloth to soak up any excess oil
6. Serve with tzatziki, Greek salad, fried potatoes.

Tips

- As a kid I enjoyed eating keftedes with ketchup. TBH, I still do 🍷 They're great eaten cold, too!
- There's a [series of videos](#) of me preparing this recipe on TikTok. This was when I was testing the recipe, so there's one difference compared to the final recipe: in the video I don't dice the mushrooms after shredding them. So remember to dice them after!