

Lentil Balls

Turkish lentil balls (köfte) made with red lentils, bulgur, and aromatic spices. A delicious vegetarian appetizer perfect for sharing.

35 min

PREP

15 min

COOK

50 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Lentil Balls

Ingredients

- 2 cup red lentil
- 1 cup cracked wheat
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 onion
- 0.5 sprig parsley
- 4 sprig scallion
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cup water
- 1 tbsp pepper paste

Instructions

- 1 Cook the lentils**

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Add 2 cups red lentils and cook for 15-20 minutes until completely tender and starting to break down.
- 2** Add 1 cup fine bulgur wheat to the pot with the lentils during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Stir occasionally and cook until the bulgur is soft and has absorbed most of the liquid.
- 3** Drain the lentil-bulgur mixture thoroughly in a fine-mesh strainer, pressing out excess water with the back of a spoon. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and let cool completely, about 20-25 minutes.
- 4 Prepare the aromatics**

Heat 4 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 2 finely diced onions and cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown and fragrant, 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool completely.
- 5 Season the mixture**

Add the cooled onions, 2 tablespoons tomato paste, 1 teaspoon pepper paste, 1 teaspoon chili flakes, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon black pepper to the lentil mixture. Knead with your hands for 5 minutes until everything is well combined and the mixture holds together.

- 6 Finely chop 0.5 sprig green onions and 4 sprigs fresh parsley. Gently fold the herbs into the mixture with your hands, being careful not to over-knead.
- 7 **Shape the lentil balls**
Wet your hands slightly to prevent sticking. Take portions of the mixture about the size of a walnut and gently squeeze in your palm, then roll into smooth balls. Place on a serving platter as you work.
- 8 Cover the platter and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up before serving. Serve chilled with fresh greens and lemon wedges.

Tips

Ensure the lentil and bulgur mixture cools completely before adding other ingredients, as heat can make the herbs wilt and affect the final texture.

Knead the mixture thoroughly with clean hands for at least 5 minutes to develop the right consistency - it should hold together when squeezed but not be sticky.

Wet your hands slightly when shaping the balls to prevent sticking and achieve smooth, uniform shapes.

Toast the bulgur lightly in a dry pan before adding to the lentils for enhanced nutty flavor and better texture.

Adjust the consistency by adding small amounts of warm water if too dry, or additional bulgur if too wet.

Chill the shaped balls for at least 30 minutes before serving to help them hold their shape better.

Taste and adjust seasoning after the mixture has rested, as flavors develop and you may need more salt or spices.

Roll the balls between your palms in a circular motion rather than squeezing to achieve the smoothest surface.