

KIBBET BATATA

Yukon-Gold Potato Kibbeh with Artichoke, Spinach & Cheese

for filling:

1 cup onion, diced
2 tablespoons olive oil
3-to-4 green onions, sliced
2-to-4 garlic cloves, minced, optional
16 oz spinach, blanched, squeezed-dry, roughly chopped
3-to-4 oz artichoke hearts, drained, roughly chopped
1-to-2 tablespoons breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons crème fraiche
2/3 cup mozzarella cheese, grated
1/3-to-1/2 cup any strong flavored cheese, grated
salt
white pepper
a pinch of nutmeg OR red Aleppo pepper

for kibbeh shell:

2 lbs Yukon gold potatoes, about 7 medium, rubbed clean
1 cup finest grade bulgur
3/4 cup water
half a small onion, grated, squeezed-dry
6 tablespoons unbleached bread flour, sifted
2-to-2 1/2 teaspoons popcorn salt, or any fine grain salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
1/2 teaspoon red Aleppo pepper
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

* to add more flavor, omit nutmeg and use below combination instead

1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon 7-spice OR allspice
1/2 teaspoon dry parsley flakes, optional

Prepare filling. Sauté onion in oil until translucent. Add green onions and garlic and sauté 2 minutes. Add spinach and artichoke; sauté until blended. Mix in breadcrumbs and crème fraiche; set aside. Once cooled, add cheeses and season. Refrigerate.

Prepare shell. Add potatoes, left whole and skin on, to a pot of salted water and bring to gentle boil. Cook 15-to-22 minutes until fork tender. Cool, peel, and mash.

In a bowl, combine bulgur and water, cover and set aside for 30 minutes. Add onion and knead mixture until it just starts to stick together you can use a free-standing mixer with the paddle attachment. Add potatoes in increments and mix until smooth. Add flour, salt and spices. Continue to mix, or knead by hand, until a homogenous malleable paste is achieved. Cover and refrigerate for 40 minutes.

Assemble kibbeh. Have ready a bowl of iced water, to wet hands as needed when working. Divide kibbeh and filling into 24 balls. Working with one shell-dough ball at a time, make an indentation on one side using your index finger. Keep rolling around to enlarge the indentation; widening and thinning the walls as you do so. Place one stuffing ball inside and pinch ends together to seal as you form a torpedo/football shaped croquette. Repeat with the rest and keep everything covered prevent excessive drying.

Cook kibbeh. Deep-fry, preferable, or shallow-fry over medium-hot heat until shells are evenly golden brown and crispy on the outside. Alternatively, brush with oil and bake in a pre-heated 375F oven for 20 minutes or so until done; this method yields a slightly less crispy potato kibbeh. Either way, thoroughly drain on paper towels and serve warm - you have the option to fry the croquettes a couple of hours in advance and heat in the oven just before serving.