

Moroccan-Spiced Chicken Meatballs
By Lidey Heuck
The New York Times/NYT Cooking

Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients

1⅓ cups plain whole-milk yogurt
1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon minced or grated garlic (about 4 cloves)
2 teaspoons lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
Kosher salt and black pepper
1 pound ground chicken (not 100 percent breast meat)
½ cup panko bread crumbs
1 large egg, lightly beaten
3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley, plus more for serving
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for frying
1 teaspoon light brown or granulated sugar
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
3 tablespoons toasted pine nuts (optional)

Preparation

1. First, make the yogurt sauce: Combine 1 cup of the yogurt, 1 teaspoon of the garlic, the lemon juice, ¼ teaspoon salt and black pepper to taste in a small bowl. Mix well, and chill until ready to use.
2. Make the meatballs: In a large bowl, combine the remaining ⅓ cup yogurt, remaining 1 tablespoon garlic, chicken, panko, egg, parsley, olive oil, sugar, paprika, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, 1½ teaspoons salt and a few generous grinds of black pepper. Mix gently but thoroughly, until incorporated. Using an ice cream scoop or two spoons, form meatballs about 1½-inches in diameter, then place them on a plate or sheet pan until ready to use.
3. In a large skillet, heat ⅛-inch olive oil over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, fry the meatballs in batches, flipping occasionally, until browned all over and cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes. (If the meatballs begin browning too quickly or the oil begins smoking, lower the heat.) Transfer the cooked meatballs to a paper towel-lined plate.
4. To serve, spread the yogurt sauce in an even layer on a flat platter. Arrange the meatballs on top, and top with a sprinkle of chopped parsley and the pine nuts, if using. Serve hot.