

Kubbeh Soup (Meat Stuffed Semolina Dumplings in Broth)

For the meat filling:

1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
1-2 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 lb (about 500 grams) ground beef, not too fatty
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/2 cup chopped parsley

For the dumpling dough:

2 cups semolina flour
1/4 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons oil (vegetable, not olive, I used canola)
1 cup very warm (not boiling) water

For the chicken broth:

8-10 cups strong chicken stock, preferably homemade
2 cups cubed fresh pumpkin
3 medium squash, scrubbed, head and tails chopped off and cubed
1/2 cup washed and chopped celery
chopped peeled onion (optional since my chicken stock already has it)

For the filling, heat the oil in a pan and add the onion and saute until light brown. Add the chopped beef and using the edge of a heatproof spoon, chop up the beef and stir with the onion, adding the paprika and black pepper. Cook till beef is browned and cooked through and place in a bowl to cool. When cool, add the chopped parsley, nutmeg and allspice and set aside.

Now prep the veggies for the chicken stock and add to the soup and cook on low simmer. Next make the dough by mixing together the semolina, flour, and salt in a bowl and then the oil and the very warm water, stirring with a fork. It will start to come together and I'd at this point use my hands to knead just till it's soft and pliable. Let the dough rest for at least 15 minutes. Pinch off pieces of dough about the size of a walnut in the shell and make a well in the middle with your thumb.

Put a spoonful of the meat mixture in the well, and form the dumpling dough around the meat mixture, patting into a round ball. Take a baking sheet and place a piece of parchment paper on it and place the filled dumplings in rows on the sheet. A note. If you will not use all the kubbeh at once, take the ones you won't use on the baking sheet (as is) and pop in the freezer. Freeze till firm and put the frozen kubbeh in a ziploc bag. They won't stick together since they've frozen individually. Fill a pot with salted water and a few tablespoons of the broth for flavoring and bring to the boil. Lower heat to medium and add as many of the kubbeh as you are planning to eat (try to cook them as needed although they are good even a day or two later, I prefer to cook them fresh). Keep watch for a couple of minutes to make sure they don't stick to the bottom of the pot and cook for about 30 minutes or so. When ready to serve, put 2 kubbeh in a bowl and ladle the hot soup over the kubbeh.