

# **Mediterranean Dinner**

The Mediterranean diet is considered one of the healthiest on earth. This menu does not necessarily reflect that, but does capture the fresh and unique flavors of this vast and varied region

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The Blankowski's

# Lamb Meatballs with Lemon-Cumin Yogurt Recipe

By Amy Wisniewski

Difficulty: Easy | Total Time: 30 mins | Active Time: 15 mins | Makes: 30 meatballs

Fresh mint and cilantro pair with the classic Mediterranean spices of cinnamon, cumin, and coriander to liven up ground lamb and plain yogurt. To prepare these as a main course, form larger meatballs and serve with pita and couscous.

What to buy: Greek yogurt can be found in most grocery stores. We like the Fage brand.

Game plan: The meatballs can be formed up to 24 hours ahead and refrigerated; they'll just need an additional 3 to 5 minutes in the oven to cook through.

The yogurt dip can be made 1 day ahead, covered tightly, and refrigerated.

This recipe was featured as part of our Bring Happy Hour Home menu, as well as our Bar Snacks and Tailgating Recipes photo galleries.

## INGREDIENTS

For the meatballs:

- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1/4 cup finely chopped white onion
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the yogurt:

- 7 ounces whole-milk Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh mint
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Zest of 1 medium lemon, minced

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the oven to 375°F and arrange a rack in the middle.
2. Combine all meatball ingredients in a large bowl and mix thoroughly with your hands.
3. Form into 30 balls (about 2 teaspoons each) and place on a baking sheet.
4. Bake until meatballs are no longer pink in the middle, about 15 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, combine all yogurt ingredients in a small bowl and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Mix well. Serve with the meatballs.

SOURCE: <http://www.chow.com/recipes/13432-lamb-meatballs-with-lemon-cumin-yogurt>

# Moroccan Spiced Chickpea Soup

- Time 60 minutes
- Serves 6

## Ingredients

- 2 TB extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for garnish
- 1 large onion, medium diced
- 6 to 8 cloves garlic, pressed
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 heaping teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can chopped tomatoes
- 3 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed well
- 1 quart (32 oz.) vegetable broth or chicken broth
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bag (5 oz.) pre-washed baby spinach
- \*\*You can add a few other vegetables like carrots, squash, etc... if you wish

## How to make it

- Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté until the onions begin to turn translucent. Add spices and sauté a minute or so. Add tomatoes, chickpeas, broth, and sugar. Season with salt and grinds fresh pepper to taste. Stir well.
- Note: Chickpeas should be just covered with liquid. If level is shy, add some water so the chickpeas are just covered.
- Bring to a simmer, then lower heat to low and gently simmer for 45 minutes.
- Remove soup from heat. If you wish, use a potato masher to mash up some of the chickpeas in the pot.
- Stir in the spinach and let heat through until wilted, just a couple minutes.
- Taste to adjust salt/pepper seasoning if necessary.
- Serve soup, drizzled lightly with extra-virgin olive oil and with warmed flat bread or toasted pita triangles.

# Pita bread

## Ingredients:

- 1 package of yeast, or quick rising yeast
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 cup lukewarm water

## Preparation:

Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup of warm water. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Let sit for 10-15 minutes until water is frothy.

Combine flour and salt in large bowl.

Make a small depression in the middle of flour and pour yeast water in depression.

Slowly add 1 cup of warm water, and stir with wooden spoon or rubber spatula until elastic.

Place dough on floured surface and knead for 10-15 minutes. When the dough is no longer sticky and is smooth and elastic, it has been successfully kneaded.

Coat large bowl with vegetable oil and place dough in bowl. Turn dough upside down so all of the dough is coated.

Allow to sit in a warm place for about 3 hours, or until it has doubled in size.

Once doubled, roll out in a rope, and pinch off 10-12 small pieces. Place balls on floured surface. Let sit covered for 10 minutes. Preheat oven to 500 deg F. and make sure rack is at the very bottom of oven. Be sure to also preheat your baking sheet.

Roll out each ball of dough with a rolling pin into circles. Each should be about 5-6 inches across and 1/4 inch thick.

Bake each circle for 4 minutes until the bread puffs up. Turn over and bake for 2 minutes.

Remove each pita with a spatula from the baking sheet and add additional pitas for baking.

Take spatula and gently push down puff. Immediately place in storage bags.

# Arugula Salad with Grilled Pears, Pistachios and Ricotta Salata

## ingredients

1 cup shelled pistachios  
4 large pears, peeled, cored, and halved  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
4 (1/3-inch-thick) round slices ricotta salata or Greek manouri cheese  
8 cups trimmed, torn arugula leaves  
For the dressing  
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
4 tablespoons honey  
4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme  
1/2 teaspoon crushed pink peppercorns  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Yield: 4 Servings – *Worth reading the reviews on this one for “make ahead” tips*-mjb

## preparation

Heat the grill to medium.  
Place the pistachios in a shallow, heavy pan and place on the grill rack.  
Pull down the lid (make sure the ventilation holes are open), and smoke for about 3 minutes. Open the lid once, shake the pan back and forth to keep the nuts from burning, and continue smoking another minute or two, until lightly browned. Remove and set aside.  
In a medium bowl, toss the pears with the olive oil.  
Place on the hottest part of the grill rack, turning until there are light grill marks on each of the pear wedges, about 3 minutes. Remove.  
Place the cheese rounds on the grill rack over the medium-hot spot on the grill and cook just until the cheese is branded lightly with grill lines.  
Flip carefully and repeat on the other side. Remove.  
Divide the arugula evenly among four plates.  
Cut each cheese round into quarters. Top the arugula with alternating wedges of grilled ricotta salata and grilled pears. Add the smoked pistachios.

Whisk together all the dressing ingredients until smooth and pour in equal amounts over each salad.  
Serve.

Read More <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/printerfriendly/Arugula-Salad-with-Grilled-Pears-Pistachios-and-Ricotta-Salata-242368#ixzz2D9lgVi2G>

# Green Beans and Carrots in Charmoula Sauce

by Anna Thomas

★★★★★ [read reviews](#) (5)

Charmoula is a North African pesto of sorts, usually made from garlic, cumin, fresh herbs, oil, and lemon juice. Here, paprika adds a warm note to the mix. This vibrant side dish tastes great hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Serves 10 to 12

Chop the garlic in a food processor. Add the cilantro and parsley and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add the olive oil, lemon juice, paprika, ground cumin, and 3/4 tsp. salt. Pulse until the sauce has the consistency of rough pesto. Season to taste with salt.

In a large pot fitted with a steamer insert, bring an inch of water to a boil over high heat. Steam the green beans, covered, until just tender, 4 to 7 minutes. Pull the steamer basket from the pot, shake to remove excess water, and transfer the beans to a large serving bowl; cover to keep warm. Add the carrots to the basket and steam, covered, until tender, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer them to the bowl with the beans.

Toss the vegetables with about three-quarters of the charmoula sauce. Season to taste with more sauce, salt, and pepper.

## Make Ahead Tips

The charmoula sauce can be made one day ahead and refrigerated in an airtight container; let it sit out at room temperature for at least an hour before tossing it with the hot vegetables.

- 2 large cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 oz. fresh cilantro (about 2 cups)
- 1 oz. fresh flat-leaf parsley (about 1 cup)
- 6 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. sweet or hot paprika
- 1/2 tsp. cumin seeds, toasted and ground
- Sea salt
- 2 lb. slender green beans, trimmed
- 1 lb. carrots, peeled and cut into thin 4-inch-long sticks
- Freshly ground black pepper

# Seafood Couscous Paella

8 Servings Prep: 25 min. Cook: 20 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 6 green onions, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cans (14-1/2 ounces each) vegetable broth
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 pounds uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 cups uncooked couscous
- 2 cups frozen peas, thawed
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons chopped almonds, toasted
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- Lemon wedges

## Directions

- In a large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray, saute red pepper in oil for 2 minutes. Add onions and garlic; cook 1 minute longer.
- Stir in broth and seasonings; bring to a boil. Add shrimp; cook for 2-3 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Return to a boil. Stir in the couscous, peas and butter.
- Remove from the heat; cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Sprinkle with almonds and parsley. Serve with lemon. Yield: 8 servings.

# Mahi-Mahi in Tomato Olive Sauce

**yield:** Makes 4 servings

**active time:** 40 minutes

**total time:** 40 minutes

The Sicilian-style tomato sauce has tons of Mediterranean flavor, thanks to the orange peel, olives, and oregano.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste (or Thai fish sauce)
- 2 14 1/2-ounce cans diced tomatoes with garlic, basil, and oregano in juice
- 4 6-ounce mahi-mahi fillets
- 1/2 cup large green olives, quartered, pitted
- 3 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano, divided
- 1 teaspoon (packed) finely grated orange peel
- Country-style white bread cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices, toasted

Heat oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté until translucent and beginning to brown, about 4 minutes. Add wine and anchovy paste. Boil until reduced to 3/4 cup, about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes with juice; bring to boil.

Sprinkle fish with salt and pepper. Add fish to skillet atop tomato mixture. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until fish is cooked through, about 9 minutes. Using slotted metal spatula, transfer fish to plate and tent with foil to keep warm. Mix olives, 2 teaspoons oregano, and orange peel into sauce in skillet. Increase heat to high and boil until sauce is reduced and thickened, about 6 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Place 1 fish fillet on each of 4 plates. Pour sauce over and around fish, sprinkle with remaining 1 teaspoon oregano, and serve with warm toasted bread.

Read More <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Mahi-Mahi-in-Tomato-Olive-Sauce-352551#ixzz2DAd0QKvE>

# Pistachio Drum Sticks

- Time 10 minutes
- Serves 38

## Ingredients

- 1 pound 2/3 ounce/ 500 grams plain flour
- 5 oz/ 150 grams semolina flour
- 1 tbsp powder sugar
- ½ oz yeast
- 5 oz/ 150 grams ghee or butter, softened
- 8 oz water
- ½ cup crushed pistachios
- Syrup:
  - 2 ½ cups sugar
  - 1 ½ cups water
  - ½ tsp lemon juice
- Oil for deep frying

## How to make it



- Make the syrup:
  - Heat sugar and water over low heat stirring until sugar dissolves . Add the lemon juice and increase the heat. Let boil for 3-4 minutes. Cool completely.
- In a large bowl mix together the first 4 ingredients. Add the ghee or butter and rub with your hands until all mixture is moistened. Make a well in the center and pour water gradually mixing with your hands until you get firm dough.
- Form into a log and cut into small pieces . Press between your hand palms to spread and then press on a patterned palette to give them the pattern you want.
- Roll each piece from the short side in the shape of cones.
- Fry for 3-4 minutes until dark brown. Drain on a paper towel and dip them in cold syrup for 5 minutes.
- Dip each cone in crushed pistachios and arrange on your serving dish.