

Golden Lentil Soup with Lamb Meatballs

It is rare that we find a lamb recipe that does not need a lot of chopping and changing, but this recipe from Wolfgang Puck that we found on the [Food Network](#) is an exception. We made no changes whatsoever, and this is delicious!

Serves 8.

Ingredients for the Soup

- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 1½ cups chopped red onion
- ½ cup diced carrot
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 Tbs turmeric
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- ½ celery stalk
- 1 branch fresh parsley
- 1 branch fresh thyme
- 1 pound golden or red lentils (or regular lentils, if not available)
- 10 cups chicken stock
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Pinch chili pepper flakes

Ingredients for the Meatballs

- 3 Tbs olive oil
- ½ cup fresh bread crumbs
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1 cup blanched almonds, toasted and ground
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup raisins, coarsely chopped
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs chopped fresh parsley leaves
- 1 Tbs chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- ¼ tsp chili pepper flakes
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbs olive oil, plus more for drizzling

Ingredients for the Garnish

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 Tbs chopped fresh mint leaves
- ½ tsp lemon zest
- ½ tsp fresh lemon juice

- 1 tsp honey
- Pinch salt

Instructions

1. Prepare the soup: In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil. Add the onion, carrot, garlic, turmeric, and cumin. Sauté over high heat until the onions are glassy, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, make a bouquet garni by tying together the celery, parsley, and thyme, and add to pan. Stir in the lentils and the chicken stock, season lightly with salt, pepper, and chili flakes, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes, or until the lentils are tender. Skim as necessary.
2. Meanwhile, prepare the meatballs: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. In a small bowl, soak bread crumbs in milk. In a mixing bowl, combine the lamb, almonds, soaked bread crumbs, onion, raisins, egg, garlic, parsley, cilantro, and
3. chili pepper flakes. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Drizzle olive oil on the platter you will place the meatballs on and rub oil into the palm of both hands. Form meat mixture into 40 golf ball-size meatballs, each approximately 1-inch in diameter.
4. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large ovenproof skillet or sauté pan. Arrange the meatballs in 1 layer in the pan, quickly sear meatballs over high heat, and then place in the oven. Cook until the meatballs are well browned and firm to the touch, turning to brown all sides, 8 to 10 minutes.
5. Prepare the garnish: In a small bowl, combine all ingredients. Refrigerate until serving time.
6. Return to the soup: Remove the celery bouquet. With an immersion blender, lightly blend soup (you want it to still be a little chunky). Correct seasoning, to taste. Alternatively, transfer 2/3 of the soup to a blender*. Blend until smooth and return to the saucepan.
7. Ladle soup into 8 soup bowls. Divide the meatballs evenly among the soup bowls and drizzle the yogurt mixture over. Serve immediately.
8. To prepare ahead: The soup can be prepared and then refrigerated earlier in the day. The meatballs can be formed and refrigerated, covered. The garnish can be prepared and refrigerated. At serving time, continue with the recipe by cooking the meatballs in oil as directed above.

*When blending hot liquids: Remove liquid from the heat and allow to cool for at least 5 minutes. Transfer liquid to a blender or food processor and fill it no more than halfway. If using a blender, release one corner of the lid. This prevents the vacuum effect that creates heat explosions. Place a towel over the top of the machine, pulse a few times then process on high speed until smooth.