

Tualatin Valley Albondigas Soup

This modern take on Albondigas Soup features a combination of meats in the meatballs, including beef, pork, and lamb, for a rich and flavorful twist. Fresh herbs and spices elevate the dish, while a touch of saffron and Pu-erh Wuliang Green tea adds a luxurious depth. This gourmet version of a classic Mexican soup is both comforting and sophisticated.

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

COOK TIME: 1 hour

FOR THE MEATBALLS:

1/2 lb ground beef
1/2 lb ground pork
1/2 lb ground lamb
1/2 C cooked rice
1 egg, beaten
1/4 C fresh cilantro, finely chopped
1/4 C fresh mint, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 † ground cumin
1 † smoked paprika
1/4 † cayenne powder
1 † salt
1/2 † black pepper

FOR THE SOUP:

1 T olive oil
1 med onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 med carrots, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 med zucchini, diced
1 med potato, diced
1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
6 C chicken broth
1/4 † saffron threads (4-5 threads)

1 † dried oregano
1 † ground cumin
1 † smoked paprika
1 † salt
1/2 † black pepper
1/4 C Pu-erh Wuliang Green tea (brewed and cooled)
1/4 C fresh cilantro, chopped (for garnish)
1/4 C fresh mint, chopped (for garnish)

PREPARE THE MEATBALLS: In a large bowl, combine ground beef, pork, and lamb with cooked rice, beaten egg, cilantro, mint, garlic, cumin, smoked paprika, cayenne powder, salt, and pepper. Mix until well combined. Form into small meatballs, about 1 inch in diameter.

SAUTÉ THE AROMATICS: In a large pot, heat olive oil over med heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté until translucent.

ADD VEGETABLES: Stir in carrots, celery, zucchini, and potato. Cook for 5 minutes until slightly tender.

ADD TOMATOES AND SPICES: Add diced tomatoes, chicken broth, saffron, oregano, cumin, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil.

COOK THE MEATBALLS: Gently add the meatballs to the soup. Reduce heat and simmer for 30-40 minutes until the meatballs are cooked through and the flavors have melded.

FINISH WITH TEA: Stir in the brewed Pu-erh Wuliang Green tea and simmer for an additional 5 minutes.