



THE UPLAND COOK

GRILLED DUCK MEATBALLS WITH SAFFRON & MINT CREAM

The Upland Cook: Super Bowl bites series



Easy



3-4 hours



Lunch/Dinner



3-4 servings

🏈 ✨ It's Super Bowl time! ✨ 🏈 Bring your A-game to the game and level up your snacks for the ultimate football night! Here's the second recipe in our special Super Bowl bites series. 🧑🍳 🧑🍳 A snack so hot, your crew will remember it more than the touchdowns! 🔥 🍔 Grilled Duck Meatballs & Mint Cream – A twist on the Persian Kabob Koobideh: flavorful grilled duck meatballs served with a silky mint cream for a perfect balance of spice and freshness. They're paired with turmeric rice, dried figs, and Corinth raisins, adding a delicious sweet-savory contrast!

INGREDIENTS

- Meatballs
- 800g ground duck meat
- 200g ground pork
- 1 large onion, grated and squeezed
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1.5 tablespoon sumac
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1.5 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley or cilantro
- 1 tablespoon melted butter or ghee
- 1 pinch of saffron (about 5-6 threads)
- 2 tablespoons of hot water

Rice

- 2 cups basmati rice
- 2 1/2 cups water or broth
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 tablespoons butter or ghee
- 2 green cardamom pods, slightly crushed
- 4 dried figs, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons Corinth raisins (or golden raisins)
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon (optional, for warmth)
- 1 tablespoon slivered almonds or pistachios (optional, for garnish)

1. Prepare the meat mixture

- In a small bowl, soak the **saffron** in **hot water**.
- Let it steep for **5 to 10 minutes** to release its aroma and color.
- In a large bowl, mix the ground duck meat and pork fat thoroughly.
- Add the grated onion (well-squeezed), minced garlic, sumac, salt, black pepper, turmeric, cumin, smoked paprika, and cinnamon.
- Add the saffron water
- Mix well with your hands for 5-10 minutes, ensuring the fat distributes evenly and the mixture holds together.
- Add the chopped herbs and continue mixing.
- Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour (or overnight) to allow the flavors to develop.

2. Shaping & Cooking

- Wet your hands with cold water and roll the mixture into golf ball-sized meatballs.
- Preheat a grill or cast-iron pan over medium-high heat (375-400°F / 190-200°C).
- Grill the meatballs for 4-5 minutes per side, turning carefully until evenly browned and fully cooked.
- Baste with melted butter or ghee during grilling for extra juiciness.
- Let the meatballs rest for a few minutes before serving.

3. Prepare the rice

- In a medium pot, melt butter or ghee, then add the chopped onion and sauté until soft and golden.
- Add turmeric and cardamom pods, stirring for 30 seconds until fragrant.
- Stir in the rinsed basmati rice and coat with the spices and onion mixture.
- Pour in the water, salt, figures and raisins, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 12-15 minutes.
- Let it rest for 5 minutes before serving.
- Optional: Garnish with slivered almonds or pistachios for extra texture.

Serving Suggestions

- Serve the grilled duck meatballs over the turmeric rice.
- Sprinkle with extra sumac and a drizzle of melted butter for more richness.
- Pair with grilled tomatoes and a yogurt-mint sauce for a cooling contrast.

