

# Pomegranate & Pistachio Meatballs

*Kufteh-ye anar-o pesteh*

**Makes: 20 meatballs**

**Preparation time: 15 minutes**

**Cooking time: 15 minutes**

1 small onion, peeled and cut into 4  
1 cup pistachios or hazelnuts, shelled  
1/4 cup bread crumbs  
1 cup chopped fresh parsley  
1/2 cup chopped fresh tarragon  
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice  
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 pounds ground lamb or turkey or fish fillet (boned and skinned)  
1 egg

#### Glaze

3/4 cup pomegranate paste  
1 cup honey or grape molasses  
1 cup Pinot Noir wine  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

#### Garnish

One package of baby basil, sprouts, mint or radishes  
1/4 cup fresh pomegranate arils

1. Grind all the ingredients except the meat and egg in a food processor. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and add the meat and egg. Knead with your hands for a few minutes. Cover and place in the refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven to 500°F. Grease a wide, nonreactive baking dish and set aside.

3. Remove the paste from the refrigerator and shape into bite-sized balls (about 1 1/2 tablespoons each). Place the meatballs in the baking dish and brush well with olive oil. Bake in the oven for 5 minutes. Turn the meatballs over once and cook for another 5 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl combine all the ingredients for the glaze.

5. Reduce the oven to 400°F. Glaze the meatballs and bake for another 5 minutes to infuse them with the flavor of the wine. Adjust seasoning to taste. If too sour add more honey; if too sweet add more pomegranate paste. Transfer to an ovenproof Pyrex bowl so the meatballs are immersed in the sauce. Keep warm in the oven or a chafing dish until ready to serve.

#### Serving Note

Place 3 meatballs in the center of a white platter and garnish with baby basil, sprouts, and a few pomegranate arils. For passing these meatballs around with drinks place them in a large serving dish and sprinkle with pomegranate arils and basil. Use toothpicks to pick up.

#### Wine Note

Not at all like your Naples version of meatballs, these *kufteh* have a wonderful set of sweet and savory flavors. The sour bite of pomegranate combines with honey, zesty herbs, and roasted pistachio and cries out for a medium-bodied, ripe and aromatic Pinot Noir, bringing out the sweetness of the lamb, turkey or fish and the roasted flavors from nuts and sauce. A medium-bodied, ripe and softly tannic Merlot from California is another possibility; it makes the dish richer. Whites will tend to get lost.

