

Keftedakia

(Tiny meatballs flavored with ouzo and mint)

Serves: 30 appetizers

2 slices white bread, trimmed of crusts and cut or torn into small pieces

1/4 cup of ouzo or other anise-flavored liqueur

7 tbsp olive oil

1/2 cup finely chopped onions

1 pound lean ground beef

1 egg

1 tbsp finely cut fresh mint or 1 tsp dried mint

1/2 tsp finely chopped garlic

1/2 tsp crumbled dried oregano

1 tsp salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 cup of flour

Soak the bread in the ouzo for at least 5 minutes.

In a heavy 10-12 inch skillet, heat 3 tbsp of the olive oil over moderate heat and sauté onions until they are soft and transparent; not brown. Stir onions frequently.

Remove the onions to a deep mixing bowl with a slotted spoon. Set skillet aside.

Squeeze the bread dry and discard the ouzo.

Add the bread, ground beef, egg, mint, garlic, oregano, salt and a few grindings of pepper to the onions. Knead mixture with hands and a spoon until the mixture is smooth. Taste for seasoning.

Moistening your hands periodically with cold water, shape the beef mixture into balls about 1 inch in diameter. Then roll the balls in flour to coat them lightly and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 200 degrees.

Add the remaining olive oil to the oil in the skillet and heat over a high heat and drop 7 or 8 meatballs into the pan and cook over moderate heat for 8 to 10 minutes. Keep meatballs warm in the oven and continue to prepare the rest.