

Shami Kebabs

minced lamb and herb patties

serves 2 – 3
medium heat

Shami kebabs are ideal for the barbecue. You can eat them in a bread roll just like a burger (but much tastier!) or you can serve them with a salad and some nan bread which you can also warm through on the barbecue.

Do try and use minced lamb which has a fat content of 15 – 20%. You can get leaner mince than this but you need the fat to baste the patties as they are cooking and to keep them moist. Much of the fat will be gone by the time you have finished cooking the kebabs.

I can't advise you on the exact number of chillies to use because the heat in fresh chillies is so variable. I'm afraid it's really trial and error with any batch of fresh chillies but my advice is to err on the side of caution. Even if the kebabs are a little mild you can use a hot relish to liven things up a bit.

If you can't get hold of bottled mint sauce use very finely chopped fresh mint, increase the lemon juice a little and add a pinch of sugar.

Gram flour is made from ground chana dhal and its most common use is in making the batter for onion bhajis and pakoras. If you can't get hold of gram flour then you can use an equal amount of ground almonds. The taste and texture will be somewhat different but the overall effect will be similar.

ingredients

350g minced lamb (15 – 20% fat content)
2 fat cloves garlic
1 – 3 thin green chillies (Cayenne or Thai type)
1 × 15ml spoon gram flour
1 × 5ml spoon lemon juice
2 × 15ml spoons finely chopped coriander leaves (cilantro)
1 × 5ml spoon English mint sauce (preferably Colman's)
1½ × 5ml spoons ground cumin seed
1½ × 5ml spoons paprika
½ × 2.5ml spoon ground cinnamon
½ × 2.5ml spoon turmeric
4 or 5 grinds of freshly milled black peppercorns
salt to taste

special equipment

a hot barbecue grill where the charcoal has turned grey

method

1. Make the garlic paste by grating the garlic on the finest mesh of a grater. Discard any solid pieces you have left over. Otherwise use a garlic press and then mash the pieces with the back of a fork
2. Slice the stalks off the chillies and cut the chillies in half lengthways. With the point of a sharp knife, scrape along the inside of the chilli halves to remove the seeds and pith. Now finely chop the chilli flesh.
3. Add the minced lamb to a large mixing bowl and spread it out over the bottom of the bowl. Add all the other ingredients, including the salt, to the bowl.
4. Use your hands to thoroughly mix the herbs and spices into the minced lamb until you have a homogeneous mass.
5. Divide the lamb mixture into 6 equal parts and roll each part into a ball.

6. Take a ball of the mixture and flatten it on a work surface. Now rotate the disc you have created while gently pushing in the sides with the fingers of your other hand until you get a flat round patty. Repeat the process for the other 5 balls of mixture. The patties should not be too thick and should end up about 7cm in diameter.
7. Refrigerate the shami kebabs for at least 1 hour.
8. Oil the barbecue's grill either with a heat resistant brush or as follows. Take a wad of kitchen paper, soak the underside with vegetable oil and rub the oiled paper over the grill. Use lots of paper to keep your hand away from the heat.
9. Place the shami kebabs on the grill and cook at a medium height over hot charcoal. Cook on each side, turning occasionally, until the the meat is browned and the edges are turning crispy.



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