

TURKEY-SPINACH MEATBALLS WITH CARDAMON TOMATO SAUCE

(from the Bewitching Kitchen, inspired by many sources)

for the meatballs:

2 tbsp olive oil
1 bag (4oz) baby spinach
¼ cup dates, coarsely chopped
1 lb ground turkey (preferably dark meat)
1 egg
1/2 cup almond flour
ground nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste

for the tomato sauce:

2 tablespoons grape seed oil
6 cardamom pods
2 dried bay leaves
1 cinnamon stick
1/4 tsp ground coriander (I used whole the first time, but ground works better here)
1 bottle or can of tomato passata (about 15 ounces)
1 teaspoons ground Kashmiri chiles (or any pepper of your choice)
salt and pepper to taste

Make the meatballs. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large, 12-inch skillet, warm the olive oil over low heat. Add the spinach and dates, sprinkle a touch of salt, and cook until the leaves begin to wilt, about 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to the food processor and run it a few times to chop a little. Add the ground turkey to the processor, the egg, almond flour and the seasonings. Pulse until everything is starting to get combined, but do not let it turn into a homogeneous paste.

Form the mixture into little balls, keep them reasonably small (about 1.5 in) otherwise they might crumble too much. Place them in the prepared baking sheet and bake for 25 minutes, turning them over half-way into baking time.

Make the tomato sauce. Heat the oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Sprinkle in the cardamom pods, bay leaves, and cinnamon sticks, and let them get very fragrant, about 1 minute. Carefully pour in the tomato passata. Add the Kashmiri chile, salt, pepper, and stir to blend. Simmer gently on low heat for 20 minutes. Discard the cardamon, bay, and cinnamon sticks.

When the meatballs are ready, place them in the warm sauce and gently simmer everything together for 10 minutes. Keep the heat very low. Serve with your favorite pasta or grain.