

Diora®

Braised Lamb Meatballs with Dark Cherries & Rosemary over Creamy Polenta

RECIPE BY GAIL SIMMONS

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

LAMB MEATBALLS

1 pound ground lamb (beef, chicken or turkey)
1 large egg
1/4 cup plain breadcrumbs
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped and divided
2 teaspoons ground coriander
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary, divided
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley, divided
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 lemon
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/2 cup Diora Pinot Noir (or similar)
1 cup frozen pitted dark cherries, thawed and roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
2 cups chicken or beef stock
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 teaspoon cornstarch
Creamy polenta

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE MEATBALLS: In a large mixing bowl, combine the lamb, egg, breadcrumbs, 2 cloves of chopped garlic, ground coriander, 2 tablespoons of chopped rosemary, 2 tablespoons of chopped parsley, 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt, and 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper. Grate the zest from half of the lemon over the top of the lamb. Grate the remaining half of the zest into a bowl and set aside. Work the mixture together with your hands, then shape into 20 balls, each about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Set the meatballs on a plate.

In a 6- to 8-quart Dutch oven or wide heavy pot with lid, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Working in batches, brown the meatballs on all sides, about 6 minutes total. Transfer to a plate.

Add the red onion to the pan and season with a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions begin to soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the remaining garlic and cook until softened and fragrant, about 2 minutes more. Add the Diora Pinot Noir and reduce slightly, about 3 minutes. Stir in the cherries, bay leaf, remaining 1 teaspoon rosemary and the stock. Bring to a simmer and cook until the flavors are blended and the sauce is slightly thickened, about 15 minutes.

Remove the bay leaf from the sauce and discard. Stir in 1 teaspoon salt and the butter, then add the meatballs. Partially cover and gently simmer over low heat, stirring once halfway through, until the meatballs are cooked, 12 to 15 minutes (if using ground chicken or turkey cook time may be slightly shorter). In a small bowl, combine cornstarch with one teaspoon of water. Add the slurry to the braising liquid, and stir until slightly thickened, about 2 more minutes.

Divide the polenta among serving plates. Top with the meatballs and sauce. Garnish with the remaining parsley and lemon zest just before serving.

FOR THE CREAMY POLENTA: In a medium saucepan, set water over high heat and bring to a boil. Slowly pour in the cornmeal, in a steady stream and begin stirring frequently with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula. The cornmeal will begin to sputter. Lower the heat and continue stirring every few minutes, and scraping up the bottom to prevent scorching, until the mixture thickens, begins to pull away from the sides of the pan and is fully cooked through, 45 to 50 minutes. If the mixture feels sticky and dry before it's finished, add a splash of water or stock and keep stirring. Season the polenta with salt and stir in the butter to combine. The polenta should now appear glossy and smooth with no uncooked lumps. Set aside on the stovetop to keep warm. Whisk in a tablespoon or two of water or stock over low heat to loosen the mixture if it clumps before serving.

CREAMY POLENTA

5 cups water, chicken or beef stock,
plus more if needed
1 cup coarse ground polenta
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter



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