Kefta & Grape Kebabs

    1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
    1 1/2 tsp paprika
    1 1/2 tsp cumin
    1/2 tsp white pepper
    1/8 tsp cayenne
    3 Tbsp minced onion
    1 Tbsp minced parsley
    1 Tbsp minced cilantro
    1 Tbsp minced tarragon (scant)
    1 1/2 tsp finely minced garlic
    1 pound ground lamb
    1 large egg yolk
    24 beautiful large seedless purple grapes

In a small bowl mix together spices.

In a large bowl toss together onion, herbs & garlic. Toss in spices and lightly blend.

Gently knead in meat and yolk till just blended. Do not overwork.

Have a small cookie sheet and a small bowl of ice water available.

Lightly wet hands. Take about a tablespoon of meat and gently roll into a oval meatball. Water will help form a smooth shape. Set on baking sheet. Repeat with remaining meat. Cover and chill at least an hour to let flavors meld and to firm up for easy skewering.

Thread 4 grapes alternately with 3 kefta on a sewer. Can cover and grill later.

On a well oiled grill cook over medium high heat total of 6-7 minutes till just done (barely pale pink center) and nice grill marks on kefta. Do not overcook. Turn skewers once or twice. Serve hot or warm.

Lailas Notes

Adapted from Mourad: an amazing cookbook from the Moroccan restaurant Aziza.

Have used 3/4 tsp. dried tarragon with fair results. I think using fresh mint instead would be tastier or increasing parsley and cilantro. Minced green onions or shallots are a good stand in for onions.

Can shape into9-12 larger ovals. Skewer and grill without grapes. Will take a few minutes more to cook. Wonderful used to fill pita bread. Layer in lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers and favorite sauce.

Great with harissa, salsa, yogurt, labne and taheena.

For more of a kick I like to double herbs and onions.

When large glorious grapes are not available I skewer smaller ones separately from meat but serve together. It is a magical combination either way.

Of course beef can be used. Important to avoid lean meat for either lamb or beef. 20/80 is a good percentage to ensure moist juicy kebabs.