

## Kefta Mkaouara

I'm a big meatball fan and a big tagine fan, so how could a Moroccan meatball tagine fail to please?

The "ou" in Mkaouara is a sort of "w" sound and I've seen this written as Mkawara. Similarly, I've seen a "q" instead of a "k" resulting in Mqawara. There're almost as many spellings as there are variations in the recipes. The spices vary considerably, some using regular paprika or smoked paprika (pimenton - maybe to fake out the charcoal on which the tagines might traditionally be cooked). Some spice up the tomato sauce while others leave it plain. Some include a vegetable in the sauce. I've even seen the eggs finally poached on top declared as optional.

I like spice in my sauce and the one I tried in the Little Marrakech restaurant in St. Albans had peas in the sauce so I use them, too. Besides, it's a veggie unit. Clearly you can modify to your heart's content but here's my starting position.

### Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	20 mins
cooking time:	

### Ingredients

400g lamb mince  
1 onion, finely chopped or  
grated  
2 cloves garlic, grated  
3 tbsp fresh parsley,  
chopped  
3 tbsp fresh coriander,  
chopped  
1 tsp paprika  
1 tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
½ tsp hot paprika/cayenne  
¼ tsp black pepper  
¼ tsp salt  
1 egg yolk  
1 onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely  
chopped  
1½ tsp paprika  
¼ tsp hot paprika  
1½ tsp cumin  
400g tin chopped tomatoes  
200g frozen peas  
1 tsp honey  
2 tbs fresh parsley, finely  
chopped

### Method

Make the meatballs. Combine all the ingredients from lamb mince down to and including the egg yolk in a mixing bowl. Knead the mixture together for a minute or two with your hands until the seasoning is evenly distributed. Take small portions of the mixture and shape into small meatballs; aim for something roughly the size of a cherry. [Moroccan meatballs are a modest bite-size, presumably to make them easy to eat by picking up with flatbread.] Cover and set aside.

It is said that small meatballs don't need browning first but I like to. In a tagine, skillet or shallow casserole (one with a lid), lightly brown the meatballs on all sides in olive oil. Remove them from the pan and set aside. In the same pan, sauté the chopped onion for a few minutes - there should be enough oil and lamb fat remaining - until soft and translucent. Add the garlic and sauté gently for another minute or two. Stir in the spices (two paprikas and cumin) then add the tinned chopped tomatoes. Add the honey and chopped herbs, stirring to mix well. Lastly, return the meatballs to the pan, stirring to coat them in sauce. Cover the pan and simmer gently for 10 minutes.

Stir in the peas and adjust the seasoning to taste. Break the eggs on top of the stew, turn the heat down to low then cover the pan and simmer gently until the eggs are cooked to your liking.

Go with tradition and serve with some flatbreads or you could try some couscous.

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2 tbs fresh coriander, finely chopped 4 eggs Salt & pepper	
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