

Turkish Lamb Lavash

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Chef's Notes

Za'atar Spice Mix is very popular in Middle Eastern cooking. This particular mix is more of a Lebanese version as it contains sumac, which contains a nice tart lemon flavor. Za'atar can be used in many dishes – from meats and veggies to rice and breads.

Step 1: Mixing the Lamb and Spices

- 1 lb ground or diced lamb
 - 2 tbsp za'atar spice
 - 2 tsp aleppo pepper
 - 2 tsp kosher salt
 - 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- Gently mix the lamb with all of the spices and set aside while you prepare the rest of the ingredients.
- Note: This step can be done a few hours ahead of time. Store in the refrigerator.

Step 2: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 1 large onion (about 2 cups)
 - 4 small eggplants, preferably Asian eggplants
 - 5 large cloves garlic
- To start your mise en place, dice the onion and eggplant into 1/2" -inch cubes. Mince the garlic and set aside.

Step 3: Cooking the Lamb and Eggplant

- 2 tbsp grapeseed or vegetable oil
 - 2 tbsp tomato paste
- Heat a heavy-bottomed pot over medium to medium-high heat. Once the pan is hot, add the oil, followed by the lamb. Cook the lamb until it just starts to brown.
- Next, add the onions and eggplant and continue to sauté for another 5 minutes or so. Once the onions and eggplant have started to soften, add the garlic. Cook for about 30 seconds or until it releases its aroma. Next, add the tomato paste and let cook for another minute.

Step 4: Adding the Chickpeas and Tomatoes

- 1 - 15 oz can chickpeas (or 1 1/2 cups cooked) Drain and rinse the chickpeas and add them to the lamb.
- 1 - 19 oz can whole tomatoes (or 2 large tomatoes) Open the can of tomatoes. Using a pair of kitchen scissors, roughly cut up the tomatoes. Add the tomatoes to the lamb.
- 1/3 cup pine nuts (optional) If using fresh tomatoes, you may need to add about a 1/2 a cup or so of liquid (such as chicken stock, tomato juice or water).

Add the pine nuts, if using and stir everything together. Turn the heat to low, partially cover and let simmer for at least an hour.

The longer the dish cooks, the more flavor it will have. Just check regularly to make sure it isn't scorching or burning. If it needs a touch of liquid, add some.

Step 5: Finishing the Lamb

- 2 cups packed fresh spinach (optional) Clean, de-stem and roughly chop the spinach. Once the stew is ready, fold in the spinach. Let cook for another 5 minutes or until the spinach has softened. Taste for seasoning.
 - 1 cup thick Greek yogurt
 - 1/2 bunch fresh cilantro
 - 1/2 bunch fresh mint leaves
 - 8 lavash, pita or wraps (optional) The lamb can be served over rice and topped with a good dollop of yogurt.
 - 2 to 3 cups cooked rice
- Alternatively, it can be placed in a pita/lavish/wrap. To do this, warm the bread slightly in the oven or in microwave. If you are adding rice to the wraps, make sure it has also been warmed properly.

To assemble, place a few sprigs of cilantro and mint on the bottom, followed by a bit of rice. Add a few spoonfuls of the lamb stew. To finish, top with a big dollop of yogurt. Roll up and serve immediately.