

Adana Kebab

Turkish · Main Course · Hard · 40 min total · Serves 4

Adana kebabi is hand-minced lamb mixed with tail fat and red pepper, pressed onto wide flat skewers and grilled over fire. Named for the southern city of Adana, it is served on lavash with sumac.

Ingredients

- 1.5 lb ground lamb (shoulder, about 20% fat) (chilled; hand-chopping gives the classic texture)
- 3 oz lamb tail fat or beef suet (finely minced; fatty lamb shoulder works if tail fat is hard to find)
- 1 medium red onion (grated and squeezed dry)
- 3 cloves garlic (finely minced)
- 1.5 tbsp Aleppo pepper (pul biber) (or 1 tbsp sweet paprika plus 0.5 tsp cayenne)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1.5 tsp kosher salt (adjust to taste)
- 0.5 tsp black pepper (freshly ground)
- 1 tsp sumac (for garnish)
- 0.5 bunch flat-leaf parsley (leaves only, chopped)
- 4 lavash or yufka bread (warmed on the grill before serving)

Method

1. Put the chilled ground lamb, tail fat, grated onion, garlic, cumin, Aleppo pepper, black pepper and salt in a large bowl, then knead vigorously with wet hands for 5 to 7 minutes until the mixture is sticky and tacky enough to cling to your palm. Refrigerate it covered for at least 1 hour, or overnight, so the fat firms up.
2. Set up a charcoal or gas grill for high heat, about 450 to 500°F (230 to 260°C) at the grate, with one hot zone and one cooler zone. If you use wooden skewers, soak them in water for 30 minutes first, although flat metal skewers are traditional.
3. Divide the meat into 4 equal portions. With wet hands, press one portion onto each flat skewer in an even sausage about 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick and 8 to 10 inches (20 to 25 cm) long, leaving a 1-inch border at the handle end so the meat holds firm.
4. Grill the kebabs over the hot zone for 10 to 12 minutes total, turning every 2 to 3 minutes, until deeply browned in spots and the centre reaches 160°F (71°C). Move any flare-ups to the cooler zone, because the fat will drip and flame.
5. Warm the lavash on the cooler side of the grill for 30 to 60 seconds per side, until it is soft, pliable and speckled with brown spots.
6. Slide a kebab off its skewer onto a sheet of lavash, sprinkle with sumac and chopped parsley, then roll it up tightly and serve right away with grilled tomatoes or a parsley salad on the side.