

Lahmacun (Turkish Flatbread with Spiced Lamb)

Turkish · Main Course · Medium · 50 min total · Serves 4

Lahmacun is a paper-thin flatbread topped with a raw paste of spiced lamb, tomato and pepper that bakes in minutes in a very hot oven. Eat it rolled up with parsley and lemon, as in Turkish lahmacuncu shops.

Ingredients

- 2 cup all-purpose flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 0.5 tsp instant yeast
- 0.75 cup warm water (about 105°F (40°C))
- 1 tbsp olive oil (plus a little for the bowl)
- 1.5 tsp salt (divided: about 0.5 tsp for the dough and 1 tsp for the topping)
- 0.5 lb ground lamb (about 20% fat, finely ground; keep cold)
- 1 medium onion (grated, then squeezed dry in a towel)
- 1 medium tomato (finely grated, skin discarded)
- 1 small green bell pepper (very finely chopped; Turkish frying pepper if you can find one)
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp pul biber (Aleppo pepper; or 0.5 tsp sweet paprika plus a pinch of chili flakes)
- 0.5 tsp ground cumin
- 0.25 cup flat-leaf parsley (finely chopped, plus whole leaves to serve)
- 1 lemon (cut into wedges to serve)

Method

1. Stir the flour, yeast and 0.5 tsp of the salt together in a large bowl, then add the warm water and olive oil and mix until a shaggy dough forms.
2. Knead on a lightly floured counter for 8 to 10 minutes until smooth and elastic, then cover and let it rest for about 1 hour, hands-off, until doubled in size.
3. Squeeze the grated onion in a towel to remove its juice, then knead it in a bowl with the lamb, grated tomato, chopped pepper, tomato paste, pul biber, cumin and the remaining 1 tsp salt for 3 to 4 minutes until smooth and spreadable; stir in the parsley and keep the topping chilled until you bake.
4. Set a baking stone or an inverted heavy baking sheet on the top rack and preheat the oven to 500°F (260°C) for at least 45 minutes so the surface is fully hot.
5. Divide the dough into 8 balls and roll each on a floured counter into a very thin round about 8 inches (20 cm) across, thin enough that you can almost see the counter through it in places.
6. Spread about 2 tablespoons of topping over each round, leaving a thin bare border at the edge, and press it gently into the dough so it sticks.
7. Bake one or two at a time on the hot stone for 5 to 7 minutes, until the edges are crisp and browned, the topping looks dry at the rim and the meat has turned from pink to grey-brown.
8. Serve right away, sprinkled with more parsley and with lemon wedges; roll each piece around a few parsley leaves and a squeeze of lemon, the way it is traditionally eaten.