

Ground Meat and Wheat Patties with Cheese – *Kibis con queso de bola*

Ingredients (for 18 pieces)

Patties:

- ¾ lb (340 g) ground meat (beef, pork, a mix, or plant-based substitute)
- ⅓ lb (150 g) dry bulgur wheat
- 9 oz (255 g) Edam (or Gouda) cheese; wax removed, and cut up into ½ oz (14 g) blocks
- 1 large tomato; washed, stem spot removed, and quartered
- ¼ white onion; peeled
- ¼ cup fresh spearmint leaves; washed
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1 tsp ground white pepper, or to taste
- Oil for deep frying

Topping:

- 1 small cabbage; tough bottom removed, shredded, washed, and drained (approx. 6 cups)
- 1 red onion; peeled, and sliced thinly
- 2-3 Habanero (or Scotch Bonnet) peppers, or to taste; washed, stems and seeds removed, and sliced thinly
- ¾ cup sour orange juice (or mix equal parts of orange juice and lime juice)
- 1 ½ tsp salt, or to taste

Prepare the topping by mixing cabbage, red onions, hot peppers, citrus juice and salt in a non reactive container; cover and reserve in the fridge until serving time.

Place dry bulgur wheat in a large bowl. Add enough cold water to cover, and allow to soak for two to four hours, adding more water, as needed. Drain water by pouring into a colander, and pressing hydrated grains down with the back of a spoon; reserve. Place tomatoes, white onion and spearmint leaves in a blender jar, and process until smooth; reserve. Transfer reserved bulgur wheat to a large mixing bowl, then add ground meat, salt, pepper, and reserved sauce. Mix all together with a wooden spoon, then continue with clean hands, until a uniform paste is formed. To make the patties, measure a quarter of a cup of paste, and form into a ball (photo below, left). Using a thumb or the handle of a wooden spoon, press the centre of the ball to make a well (photo below, centre). Continue pressing inside the edge, to form a bowl with the paste (photo below, right):



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Place a block of cheese in the bowl (photo below, left), then press the edge of the bowl to close, and rotate the patty to form an oval with a pointy end (photo below, centre). Turn the patty around, and make the other end pointy; repeat with the rest of the paste (photo below, right):



In a pot, pour enough oil for a depth enough to cover the patties; warm up over high heat until it starts to ripple (around 375°F-190°C). Add patties in batches, careful not crowd the pot; the oil should start bubbling. Flip the patties for an even browning, and remove once golden and crispy. Transfer to paper towels to remove excess oil; continue frying patties in batches.

Serve hot with a side of topping:



The traditional way in the Yucatan peninsula is to open the patty lengthwise (notice the delicious melted cheese in the middle, photo below, left), then filling with the cabbage preparation (photo below, right):

