

## INGREDIENTS:

### *The meatballs*

- 1 pound lean ground lamb
- 1 small yellow onion, minced (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup currants
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh oregano or  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon dried
- 1 teaspoon stone-ground mustard
- 2 teaspoon capers, rinsed and chopped
- 1 tablespoon Marsala (optional)
- Kosher salt and pepper to taste

- Olive oil as needed

### *The rice*

- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 cups long-grain rice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry, unoaked white wine (optional)
- 4-5 tablespoons tomato paste
- $2\frac{3}{4}$  cups water
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt or to taste
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon pepper or to taste
- 2 small thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons pitted and chopped green olives (optional)

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**INSTRUCTIONS: For the meatballs:** Mix together the lamb, onion, garlic, currants, breadcrumbs, egg, oregano, mustard, capers, Marsala (if using), salt and pepper. Cook a small piece of the lamb mixture, taste and adjust seasoning. Roll into meatballs with a diameter of about 1 inch; you should have about 3 dozen. Brown in a nonstick skillet over medium to medium-high heat; use a little oil if the lamb is extremely lean or if using an aluminum or stainless steel pan. Drain browned meatballs on paper towels and set aside.

**For the rice:** Preheat oven to 400°. In a large pot over medium heat, sauté the onions in the oil until translucent. Add the butter and rice; cook, stirring occasionally until the rice becomes translucent, about 3-5 minutes. Add wine, if using, stir and cook briefly until absorbed, about 5-10 seconds. Meanwhile, whisk the tomato paste into the water. Add to the pot along with salt, pepper and thyme sprigs; stir. Bring mixture to a simmer.

Transfer rice and liquid into a 2-quart cazuela or ovenproof baking dish. Place meatballs on top. Cover with foil or plastic-lined foil, forming a tight seal.

Place in oven for 5 minutes then turn heat down to 350° and bake for 40 minutes. Uncover — be careful of the hot steam — remove thyme sprigs and stir gently with a fork; re-cover and allow to sit another 5 minutes. Serve on warmed plates and garnish with optional chopped olives.

**Stovetop instructions:** Follow directions as above but decrease water to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  cups. Once the rice and liquid mixture comes to a simmer, add the meatballs, cover pot with a tight-fitting lid and turn heat to low; cook 20 minutes. Remove pot from heat; allow to steam for 5 minutes. Uncover and stir gently with fork; replace cover and allow to sit another 5 minutes before serving.

Serves 6-8

**PER SERVING:** 365 calories, 15 g protein, 45 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (5 g saturated), 68 mg cholesterol, 371 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.