



sharing our Greek culinary heritage

KO's Yiouvarlakia

(Meatball Soup with Rice)

For the meatballs, you will need...

500g beef mince
1 brown onion, grated
1 egg
1/2 cup medium grain rice
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon cracked black pepper
20g mint leaves, finely chopped
60g parsley leaves, finely chopped
60g dill fronds, finely chopped

Preparing the meatballs...

- Combine all of the meatball ingredients in a bowl and mix well

For the soup you will need...

4 litres water
1 tablespoon salt
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
Meatball mixture

Preparing the soup...

- Place the water, salt and EVOO in a large pot and heat on high
- Form the meatball mixture into balls, about 5cm in diameter, and gently drop the meatballs into the boiling soup

- Return the soup to a rolling boil, before reducing to a gentle boil for 20 - 30 minutes
- Skim the foam from the top of the soup if you wish
- Add 1 1/2 cups medium grain rice to the pot and stir through well
- Continue to boil gently until the rice is almost cooked through (just before it reaches *al dente* - see Key Points)
- Remove the pot from the heat and allow it to sit for 10 minutes before serving

Serving the yiouvarlakia...

- You can enjoy the soup as is, or you can add an avgolemono (egg-lemon) wash to it, for some extra frothy-zing

For the avgolemono wash...

- Separate 3 eggs, juice 3 lemons and reserve 150ml of stock from the pot
- Allow the stock to cool a little, so that it's warm rather than hot
- Beat the egg whites till they form soft peaks
- Gently fold in the egg yolks, the lemon juice and the warm stock, in turn, to create the avgolemono wash
- Slowly add the avgolemono wash to the yiouvarlakia pot and mix through
- Serve and enjoy!

Key Points

- I usually start heating the water in the pot just before I start preparing the mince meat mixture. That way I can form the meatballs and drop them into the pot as soon as the mince meat mixture is ready
- Skimming the foam from the boiling broth is optional. The foam is actually cooked blood, which is full of nutrients. It may not look pretty, but it's good for you!
- It is really important not to undercook or overcook the rice in the soup. If you undercook the rice, it will have a crunchy texture. If you overcook the rice, the rice grains will 'split' and have a soft, mushy texture. Neither is good!

The mouth-feel of the rice when you are eating the soup should be distinct grains of rice, with a little firmness to the tooth (*al dente*). To achieve this, you need to keep your eye on the rice and test it. As the rice grains begin to enlarge, pick out a grain of rice and bite on it to see how cooked it is. Keep doing this until it is almost *al dente*

As the soup rests and begins to cool down, it will continue to absorb water from the broth and reach *al dente*. This is when you serve it and enjoy it at its best! If you leave the soup to rest for too long, the rice will continue to absorb water, expand and reach the softer, split stage

- If you are making and adding avgolemono to the soup, start preparing it as soon as you take the soup off the heat. It should take about 10 minutes to make the avgolemono, the same time the soup is left to rest. If you wait too long to make and add the avgolemono to the soup, the rice will reach the split stage

- The stock you add to the avgolemono should be warm, not hot; otherwise the heat will scramble the eggs. You may want to reserve the soup stock used in the avgolemono 10 minutes before you take the soup off heat. That way the reserved stock has enough time to cool down, yet still be warm enough, to temper the eggs, rather than cook them
- If you have any leftover soup it will likely reach the split stage, but it's not the end of the world if a bowl or two are eaten this way
- This recipe and the quantities assume you are using a vented lid on your pot. If you are not using a lid, you will need to add a little bit more water to account for the extra loss of water due to evaporation