

Kofta-esque Beef Sausages

Makes 8-10 sausages | 25 minutes prep + 15 minutes cook time

These meatball-adjacent cylinders of spiced ground beef are inspired by the wide variety of uncased sausages served across Eastern Europe and the Levant. The earliest historic recipes come from old Arab cookbooks, and the word kofta is derived from an old Persian word for pounded meat. These days cuisines from Austria to India include various ground meat dishes called kofta.

The addition of a little baking soda, aka sodium bicarbonate, changes the chemistry of the meat and makes it more alkaline. The higher pH prevents the proteins from bonding readily, and the result is moister, more tender meat. That the alkalinity helps the browning called the Maillard reaction and improves the flavor is an added bonus.

Serve these as part of a mezze, the Middle Eastern assortment of smallish dishes used as appetizers or a light meal.

1 lb ground beef

1 golf ball sized shallot, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 teaspoons New York Shuk Shawarma spice mix

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon kosher-style sea salt

Step 1 Mix the ground beef with onion, shallot, spices, baking soda, and salt. Let the mixture rest for at least 15 minutes.

Step 2 Use wet hands to form the meat mixture into cylindrical sausages roughly 1 inch in diameter and about 2-3 inches long.

Step 3 Grill the sausages over direct heat for about 2 minutes per side. They can also be cooked on the stovetop in a heavy skillet or baked at 375F for about 15 minutes.