

# Kibbeh Footballs – Arras Mehshah

a recipe from [www.maureenabood.com](http://www.maureenabood.com)

*The kibbeh balls are versatile—they can be shaped as patties, balls, or the traditional torpedo/football. They can be stuffed or not stuffed at all. They can be baked or fried. However you do it, they are going to be delicious. The kibbeh footballs are great for a picnic eaten room temperature, or served warm with tahini sauce or hummus, labne, and good flatbread or pita bread. This recipe makes about 40 arras kibbeh.*

For the stuffing (househ):

2 cups sweet onion (1 medium onion), chopped (1/4")  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 pound ground round  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
½ teaspoon pepper  
1 cup toasted pine nuts

For the kibbeh:

2 cups fine bulghur (#1 grade)  
1 cup sweet onion (1 small onion), coarsely chopped  
2 tablespoons cinnamon  
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper  
5 teaspoons salt  
2 lbs. eye of round beef, trimmed of all fat and gristle, ground twice by you or the butcher

Canola or other neutral oil, for frying

*Make the stuffing (househ):*

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, season with a little salt, and sauté until soft and translucent. Do not brown. Add the meat, season with salt, cinnamon, and pepper. Cook the meat, breaking it up into small pieces as it cooks, until cooked through. Remove from the heat, transfer to a bowl, and add the pine nuts. Set aside.

*Make the kibbeh:*

Rinse the bulghur in cold water, drain, and cover to ½ inch with cold water. Soak for ½ hour, or until the bulghur is softened and most of the water absorbed.

Either ask the butcher to grind the meat for you (twice on the smaller blades; mention it should be done first thing, on clean blades), or grind it yourself. To grind meat, slice the trimmed meat into rectangles, about 4x2 inches. Season lightly with salt and pepper and freeze for 30 minutes. Grind the meat once on the fine/small holes on the grinder, or twice on the large holes.

Puree the 1 cup coarsely chopped onion with 1/8 cup cold water. Place the water in the blender first, then the onion, so that the blades don't get stuck under the onion. You may need to stop and stir the onion so that it gets caught by the blades.

To combine the kibbeh meat, keep a small bowl of ice water nearby to keep hands wet and cold. In a large bowl, knead the meat with the pureed onion and about half of the cracked wheat. If there is any visible water left in the cracked wheat from soaking, squeeze it out of the wheat before adding it to the kibbeh. Dip your hands in water as you knead; be careful not to add too much water to the kibbeh or it will become mushy. Add the wheat ½ cup at a time until it's fully incorporated. Season with salt, pepper, cayenne and cinnamon, tasting and adjusting the seasoning.

Make the kibbeh footballs:

Keep the bowl of ice water handy. Take about 2 tablespoons of the meat "dough" and shape into a ball. Wet the the palm of the hand the dough is resting in with cold water, and use your first finger of the other hand to hollow out the ball of meat by pushing into it. The walls of the meat should be about 1/8" thick all the way around. Keep the meat in an oblong/torpedo shape for footballs, or a ball shape for round balls.

Using a demitasse spoon, spoon a teaspoon or two of filling into the kibbeh shell. Don't overstuff, and be careful not to get the filling on the edge of the shell that is going to be closed up, so that it will close easily. Push the kibbeh together at the open end and gently shape the kibbeh into a torpedo in the palms of your hands, using the tips of your fingers to pull each end out to a point. Smooth the kibbeh with a touch of cold water, making sure there aren't any openings. Set the kibbeh footballs on a sheet pan as you make them.

To fry the kibbeh footballs, fill a large, heavy, nonstick skillet with enough canola oil to reach halfway up the sides of the footballs. Heat the oil to 375 degrees, or until a small piece of herb dropped in bubbles up right away. Place several kibbeh balls gently into the oil using a large spoon to slide them in (my skillet held ten with some space around each one). Fry until deep golden brown, then turn over with tongs and fry the other side until deep golden brown, about 4 minutes total. Remove the kibbeh from the pan with tongs to a paper towel-lined platter.

Alternately, bake the kibbeh footballs on heavy sheet pans in a 375 degree oven for about 25 minutes. Brush first with olive oil or melted butter and bake until deep golden brown.

Cool slightly and serve warm, or cool and serve room temperature. The kibbeh footballs freeze well, and will hold in the refrigerator for a couple of days. Cool slightly and serve warm, or cool and serve room temperature. The kibbeh footballs freeze well, and will hold in the refrigerator for a couple of days.