

# Lebanese Kibbeh Nayeh

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

*The ratio of cracked wheat to meat is 1:1, so you can adjust quantities easily. I always make much more raw kibbeh than we are going to eat because I want to bake or fry it the next day. This recipe is for a manageable 2 pounds of meat, but I make as much as 5 pounds to provide for day 2 of kibbeh-love. The meat is ideally ground by the butcher; technique to grind it yourself is below. And just because we do love meat with meat, there is a method below for househ, a browned beef, onion, and pine nut combo that is often served atop the kibbeh nayeh.*

2 cups fine bulghur (#1 grade)  
1 cup sweet onion, coarsely chopped, plus 1 cup finely chopped sweet onion  
1-2 tablespoons cinnamon  
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper  
5 teaspoons salt  
2 lbs. eye of round beef, trimmed of all fat and gristle  
2 tablespoons fresh mint, finely chopped  
3-4 tablespoons high quality olive oil

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.

Either ask the butcher to grind the meat for you (three times 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 hands in water as you knead, adding about ¼ cup of the water in total; be careful not to add too much water to the kibbeh or it will become mushy rather than simply soft. 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.

To serve, shape kibbeh on a platter with a slightly flat top. Drizzle with olive oil and top with the finely chopped onion and mint. Serve with pita bread and *laban* (yogurt). Toasted pine nuts are an excellent garnish too.

Kibbeh is often served topped with househ (browned beef and onion with pine nuts). Saute a medium yellow onion, chopped, in olive oil until soft. Add ½ pound of ground beef and season with salt, pepper, and ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Cook until browned, squeeze half of a lemon over the meat, and toss with ½ cup toasted pine nuts. Place a spoonful over the kibbeh served on your plate.