FINNISH MEATBALLS WITH ALLSPICE, SOUR CREAM, AND LINGONBERRIES

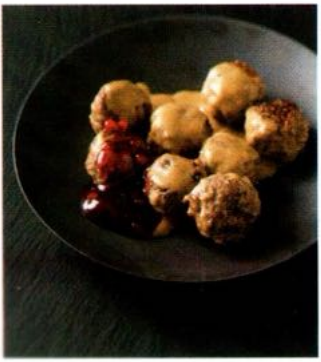
From *Falling Cloudberries: A World of Family Recipes* by Tessa Kiros

SERVES 4 TO 6

Allspice is very popular in Finland; its taste is a combination of nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, and black pepper. If you are not sure that what you have got in your spice rack is, in fact, allspice, then use less than indicated here and add a little more later. You can use ordinary cream instead of the sour cream. You can also use a bought jam.

- 3 slices white bread, crusts removed
- ⅔ cup milk
- 2¼ pounds mixed ground pork and beef
- 1 large egg
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground allspice
- 4½ tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sour cream
- Lingonberry or cranberry jam (page 127), to serve

▸Soak the bread in the milk in a large bowl for about 30 minutes, or until it has absorbed all the milk and is very soft. Add the meat, egg, onion, and allspice, and season with salt and pepper. Knead together well with your hands, then form into small balls about the size of walnuts, rolling them between your palms so that they are compact and won't fall apart when cooking.

▸Heat 2½ tablespoons of the butter with the olive oil in a nonstick skillet. Fry the meatballs in batches, turning them once during cooking. (You will have to work quite quickly and take care not to burn the butter and oil. If necessary, wipe out the skillet between batches and start again with a little less butter and oil.) Transfer the cooked meatballs to a heavy-bottomed saucepan with any onion that is on the bottom of the skillet and continue with the next batch.

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