

MEATBALLS, FULLY



THE COOKFUL

Edited by Christine Pittman

Meatballs, Fully

After the holiday season there is often a bit of time when people are trying to get healthier. Perhaps strangely, right around then is also when the big Game Day Season begins where we have all kinds of cheesy dips, wings, nachos and every other party food you can imagine. How is it that we do this healthy thing right alongside this splurge? I think it makes a lot of sense. We're careful during the week and focusing on healthy foods and then we get to relax and go a little bit crazy when the game's on.

In honor of this early-in-the-year healthy-then-splurge pattern, we've decided to focus on meatballs. They're a great game day food (think cocktail meatballs, sweet and sour meatballs, Swedish meatballs) but they can also be a healthy part of your weekday meal. For instance, we've got some great tips for baking meatballs and delicious turkey meatballs and more weeknight delights.

In the pages ahead you'll learn a lot about meatballs and get to go around the world trying Chinese, Greek, Spanish and Mexican versions too. It's a true meatball party in a book.

I promise you'll have a ball!

Ha!

Christine



THE COOKFUL

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Are Meatballs Really Italian?

By Kevin Kessler

We Americans love our meatballs but are they authentic Italian cuisine?

I grew up in an Italian household where Sunday dinners were reserved for family time with some macaroni, meatballs and gravy (Italian American for Tomato Sauce). That's pretty typical for an Italian American family, and really, many other families as evidenced by all the variations we found on classic Italian-style meatballs.

Heck, my great grandfather used to get mad on Thanksgiving if there wasn't a bowl of meatballs served BEFORE the turkey with appetizers. Meatballs are more than just a simple food to Italian American families, it's a staple of our cuisine. But, are meatballs actually Italian?

It broke my heart to discover that no, they're not. If you're in Italy and you manage to find a plate of spaghetti and meatballs, it is likely only there to cater to American tourists. The traditional spaghetti and meatballs dinner is a creation of the American household and has no actual roots in Italian culture.

Italy does have their own version of meatballs, but they're very different from what we know here. Known as polpettes, they're very rarely eaten alongside pasta. These golf ball sized bites are also not necessarily made from ground beef, as American meatballs are. Instead, they could come from any meat source, even fish.

The American origins of meatballs come as a result of circumstance more than anything else. In the late 1800s and early 1900s Americans were eating a lot of red meat and meatballs were an affordable and easy recipe to throw together. They were typically made from the cheapest cuts of meat, so Italian immigrants needed something to improve the taste and make them more appealing.

At the time, "sailor sauce" was very popular in the United States, but you might know it by its more common name, marinara. This sauce, originally created in Naples, Italy, owed its popularity to availability. Canned tomatoes, the main ingredient of marinara sauce, were among one of the only readily available and affordable items in local grocery stores. Meatballs were mixed with marinara and it was a match made in heaven.

But where does the meatball come from? That's a question that doesn't really have an answer. It's a food that transcends cultures. Most populated regions in the world have some form of meatball in their culinary life. It's theorized that meatballs might have originated from a Persian dish known as kofta. It combines minced ground meat with rice, bulgur or mashed lentils that are rolled into cylinders.

Are Meatballs Really Italian?

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The Persians passed kofta on to the Arab world, where the recipe was altered and rolled into orange-sized balls. From there, some believe it was passed along trade routes to Greece, Spain and North Africa. So, while some consider their plate of spaghetti and meatballs to be “fine Italian dining”, it would be more accurate to call this staple of Sunday dinner tables an original American dish.



How to Make Meatballs

By Jamie Silva

This is the best meatball recipe. Follow the easy steps and you'll be making perfect meatballs in no time.

Sure, making meatballs is easy. You just grab some ground meat, add some spices and form them into balls, right? Well, not exactly. See, there's a difference between making okay meatballs vs. making perfect meatballs. Today, my friends, I'm here to show you how I make perfect meatballs. Flavorful, tender and juicy, and the best part of all – they aren't hard to make. It's all about the ingredients. Here are my top tips for making the best meatballs.

Ingredients

- + Use fresh, quality ingredients.
- + Don't go overboard on seasonings.
- + Use a mix of full fat ground pork and ground beef for tender, juicy meatballs.
- + Use dry breadcrumbs over soaked bread. Soaked bread may result in mushy, less flavorful meatballs. Boo.

How to Make Meatballs

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At the end of the day, meatballs are meant to be simple. Don't complicate it!

Mixing and Shaping the Meatballs

Use your hands to mix all the ingredients together. Trust me on this one; you can combine them better by hand than with a spoon.

Form balls with a cookie scoop then roll them into a perfect ball by hand. (Yep, a 1 inch cookie scoop will give you the perfect size each time.)

Last but certainly not least, cook those babies. I've always been "team bake" when it comes to making meatballs but I recently discovered how easy it is to pan fry them.

For some reason, I thought it would take longer to pan fry vs. bake but guess what! I pan fried these babies and they were ready in just 15 minutes. Crispy crust and all. If that's not the perfect meatball, I don't know what is.

Try it and see what your family says. I just know they're going to rave about them.

Bonus Tip: After you add the salt and pepper and mix, take a bit of the mixture (like the size of a quarter) and put it on a microwave-safe plate and microwave it until no longer pink, about 20-30 seconds. Taste it to assess if you have enough seasoning.

Yield: 15 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. ground beef

1/2 lb. ground pork

1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs

1 large egg

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

1/4 cup finely chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley

Salt and pepper to taste

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1. In bowl, combine ground meats, breadcrumbs, egg, onion, parsley, salt and pepper. Mix well using hands but do not overmix.
2. Shape the mixture into 1 inch balls and place them on a cutting board.
3. In a skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Pan fry the meatballs until they are browned on all sides and cooked through, about 15 minutes. If you cut into one of them and see no pink, they are done.
4. Transfer the meatballs to a paper towel to drain then serve.



How to Bake Meatballs

By Jamie Silva

You'll love this little trick for making baked meatballs just as crispy and amazing as pan fried.

There's something familiar and happy about making meatballs. They don't call them comfort food for nothing, amiright!?! Baking flavorful meatballs is on today's to-do list but there are a few important things you need to know before we get started. Make sure you follow the steps we shared above for how to make meatballs. Once you follow the steps for making and shaping the (very best) meatballs, we'll show you how to bake the best meatballs.

Pop them in the oven for 15-20 minutes then broil them for another 10 minutes to make sure they get that deliciously crispy crust like pan frying gives them. Baking them gives the meatballs a little more flavor without additional oil since you are searing the outside under the broiler in your oven. Just make sure you bake them on a really heavy-duty baking sheet.

How to Bake Meatballs

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I like to bake extra batches of meatballs and freeze them in resealable bags once they've cooled. They'll keep for up to six months which means your family can satisfy that meatball craving any time, any day with very little work.

Bonus Tip: After you add the salt and pepper and mix, take a bit of the mixture (like the size of a quarter) and put it on a microwave-safe plate and microwave it until no longer pink, about 20-30 seconds. Taste it to assess if you have enough seasoning.

Yield: 15 meatballs

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. ground beef

1/2 lb. ground pork

1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs

1 large egg

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

1/4 cup finely chopped Italian
flat-leaf parsley

Salt & pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In bowl, combine ground meat, breadcrumbs, egg, onion, parsley, salt and pepper. Mix thoroughly.
3. Shape the mixture into 1 inch balls and place them on the baking sheet. Bake until no longer pink inside, about 18-20 minutes, then broil on high for another 10 minutes for a deliciously crispy crust. Remove from oven. Serve immediately.



Classic Italian-Style Meatballs

By Allie McDonald

Classic Italian-style meatballs are the perfect hearty and comforting addition to a steaming bowl of spaghetti and marinara.

There's nothing like a steaming hot bowl of spaghetti and meatballs after a long day, wouldn't you agree? Best of all, they're so easy to whip up ahead of time and freeze for a busy week ahead and make for a nice stress-free family dinner.

There are so many delicious ways to enjoy them, but when we are making spaghetti and meatballs, we like to use Classic Italian-style Meatballs.

We make them on the larger side and use a blend of ground beef and pork for optimal flavor. Ingredients such as Parmesan, fresh parsley and breadcrumbs create the classic flavorful profile that we all crave. There's also milk in the mix. While you're free to use a lower fat content milk, using whole milk gives them a wonderful, moist texture and adds to the flavor.

Classic Italian-Style Meatballs

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We fry them in a skillet for the perfect crispy exterior then drop them into a pot of sauce or serve them straight out of the pan, but if you'd like to skip the oil, you can bake them instead.

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil,
divided

1/2 cup minced onion

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 cup breadcrumbs

2 large eggs

1/2 cup whole milk

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1 and 1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. ground pepper

1 lb. ground pork

1 lb. ground beef

1. Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and allow it to heat.
2. Add the onion to the skillet and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for an additional 2 minutes.
3. In a bowl, mix the onions and garlic, breadcrumbs, eggs, whole milk, Parmesan cheese, parsley, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Whisk everything together then add the beef and pork and mix well with a fork or your hands, incorporating everything evenly but do not overmix (it makes the meat tough).
4. When everything is mixed together, take about 3 tablespoons of the meat and roll into large meatballs. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the meatballs and turn the heat to medium low. Sauté the meatballs for 15 to 20 minutes, flipping them over occasionally. When they're cooked through, remove from the heat and serve with desired sauce and pasta.

Gluten-Free Meatballs

By Allie McDonald

Our secret ingredient makes these gluten-free meatballs the best you'll ever make. Give them a try and watch your family gobble them up.

If you need to eat gluten-free it can be tricky to find your favorite Italian dishes because so many classic Italian comfort foods are loaded with gluten-containing ingredients that just don't taste the same when you remove the gluten.

Sure, you could just remove the breadcrumbs from meatballs but they don't taste the same and what's the fun in that? I have a super-easy substitution for making gluten-free meatballs that have that crave-worthy taste and texture of our Classic Italian-style Meatballs.

The secret is almond meal. I love the simple swap of using almond meal in place of traditional breadcrumbs. It mimics the texture of the breadcrumb, making it the perfect substitution. These meatballs are loaded with classic flavor and they taste wonderful with marinara and spiralized vegetable noodles or your favorite gluten-free pasta.



Gluten-Free Meatballs

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Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

2 and 1/2 Tbsp. extra virgin
olive oil, divided
1/4 cup minced onion
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup almond meal
1 large egg
1 Tbsp. whole milk
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
1 lb. ground beef

1. Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1/2 tablespoon of the olive oil and allow it to heat. Add the onion to the skillet and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Remove from the skillet.
2. In a bowl, add the onion and garlic, almond meal, eggs, milk, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Whisk everything together. Add the beef and mix well with a fork or your hands, incorporating everything evenly but don't overmix or it will make the meat tough. When everything is mixed together, take about 2 tablespoons of the meat and roll into meatballs.
3. Heat the remaining olive oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the meatballs and turn the heat to medium low. Sauté the meatballs for 15 to 20 minutes, flipping them over occasionally. When they're cooked through, remove from the heat and serve with desired sauce and gluten-free noodles.

Baked Turkey Meatballs

By Allie McDonalds

Trying to lighten up your favorite dishes? We're keeping it tasty with these turkey meatballs.

Baked turkey meatballs are a tasty yet lighter version of our Classic Italian-style Meatballs. They're delicate and well-balanced, and incredibly easy to whip up. You don't have to babysit them on the stove. All you have to do is plop them on a baking sheet, pop them in the oven and set the timer.

Because turkey has a mild flavor and we keep the seasonings simple, you can be as creative as you like with the sauces you serve them with - traditional marinara, white sauce and Tzatziki Sauce are my favorites. (You can get our super easy [Tzatziki Sauce recipe here](#).)

The beauty of this recipe or any meatball recipe, really, is that you can double up the batches and throw one in the freezer for another night. Who doesn't love having dinner in the freezer ready to heat on a super busy week night? And let's face it, whether you have kids or not, every weeknight seems to be busy for one reason or another.



Baked Turkey Meatballs

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Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

2 and 1/2 Tbsp. extra virgin
olive oil, divided
1/4 cup minced onion
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup breadcrumbs
1 large egg
1 Tbsp. whole milk
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
1 lb. ground turkey

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1/2 tablespoon of the olive oil and allow it to heat. Mince the onion and garlic. Add the onion to the skillet and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook for an additional 2 minutes.
2. In a bowl, add the onions and garlic, breadcrumbs, egg, milk, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Whisk everything together. Add the turkey and mix well with a fork or your hands, incorporating everything evenly. When everything is mixed together, take about 2 tablespoons of the meat and roll into meatballs. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Place in the oven for 20-25 minutes until the meatballs are slightly browned.



Grape Jelly Meatballs

By Sam Ellis

Make Grape Jelly Meatballs for your next party and watch them disappear. Guests love them!

If you haven't heard of Grape Jelly Meatballs before, today's your lucky day. This party app is so popular and easy and you know how we love easy recipes. It's a classic party favorite but we're updating it with a flavorful twist.

Like we said, they're so easy to throw together and with only 4 ingredients (including the meatballs, which you can buy frozen or make your own basic (delicious!) meatballs or Gluten-free Meatballs), it doesn't get much easier. Traditionally, the only ingredients you need to add are grape jelly and chili sauce, but I changed it up and added in a little smoked paprika to give the dish a smoky flavor. The amount listed in the recipe is just enough to give a hint, so if you're a big fan of smokey flavor, feel free to add a bit more!

The great thing about this recipe is how easy it is to just stick it in a crock pot, set and forget.

Grape Jelly Meatballs

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I find it's better to mix the sauce first to ensure that the grape jelly melts evenly and mixes together with the chili sauce and paprika, but if you're short on time, you can absolutely dump everything in the slow cooker to let it mingle on its own!

Mix everything together and set on high for 2-3 hours. I recommend stirring it a couple times during the cook time just so everything has an even coating, but it's so handy not having to watch it on the stove.

Yield: 64 meatballs

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

1 jar (12 oz.) grape jelly

1 bottle (12 oz.) chili sauce

1/8 tsp. smoked paprika

64 (1/2 oz.) meatballs (a 32 oz. bag of frozen)

1. In a sauce pan, mix together the grape jelly, chili sauce and smoked paprika over low heat. Allow the mixture to melt together and stir occasionally.
2. Place meatballs into slow cooker and pour the sauce over them. Turn slow cooker on high until meatballs are heated through and temp at 165°F inside the meatballs. Depending on the size of your slow cooker this will take 1-2 hours. Turn slow cooker down to warm setting to serve.

Cocktail Meatballs

By Sam Ellis

Your party menu isn't complete until you add a batch of these crowd favorite cocktail meatballs.

Classic cocktail meatballs come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and flavors, but this classic recipe is my favorite. The tangy savory sauce has a hint of sweetness that's so addictive it ensures no leftovers (even though I always secretly want there to be leftovers).

While most cocktail meatball sauces call for a jam or jelly of some kind (like our popular Grape Jelly Meatballs, I love a sauce that's a little different. This one is tomato-based and has just a bit of brown sugar to add a hint of barbecue sweetness that coats each meatball like a glaze and keeps guests going back for more.

There are lots of ways to cook meatballs, but one of my favorites, especially with this rich tomato-based sauce, is to braise them. I usually braise them in a pan with some butter then once they are cooked through add them to my signature sauce. If you're feeling lazy like me and buy frozen meatballs, heating them through by braising them this way yields the best flavor. If you're feeling ambitious you can make your own meatballs using one of our basic meatball recipes.

While the meatballs are braising, whip up the cocktail sauce then add the braised meatballs and heat a few minutes. Pile them into a bowl and serve them as a party appetizer.



Cocktail Meatballs

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Yield: 64 meatballs

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
3/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. onion powder
64 (1/2 oz.) frozen store-bought meatballs (or homemade)

1. In a large skillet, mix together tomato sauce, brown sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, garlic powder and onion powder. Bring to a simmer on low heat until all is incorporated, about 10 minutes.
2. Add in meatballs, stir to coat. Cover and cook over medium-low heat until heated through, about 15-20 minutes.



BBQ Meatballs

By Jamie Silva

You can't go wrong with BBQ Meatballs as a party appetizer any time of year.

Whether you start with homemade meatballs or buy them frozen, the secret to making the best barbecue meatballs is making this delicious slightly sweet and smoky barbecue sauce to go with them. Feel free to add 1/2 cup of brown sugar instead of 1/4 if you like your sauce sweeter.

I know you're thinking, "Make my OWN barbecue sauce? Impossible." Guess what? Making homemade barbecue sauce is not hard AT ALL. All you do is add ketchup, brown sugar, apple cider vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and spices in a skillet and bring it all to a boil.

Once you bring the sauce to a boil, add the meatballs and simmer for about 10-15 minutes. That's it. Done. And I know I called them a party appetizer, but you can serve 'em to your family for dinner too. They go great with rice or our favorite [Mashed Potatoes](#). I know your family's going to love them.

BBQ Meatballs

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Yield: 5 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 55 minutes

Ingredients:

1 bag (32 oz.) store-bought
frozen meatballs (or
homemade)

1/2 cup ketchup

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar

1/4 cup light brown sugar,
packed

1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp. smoked paprika

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. pepper

1. Make meatballs according to the package instructions, or make homemade.
2. In a skillet, add the ketchup, vinegar, brown sugar, Worcestershire, smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low.
3. Add meatballs and simmer, uncovered, until heated through, 10-15 minutes.

Cranberry Meatballs

By Jamie Silva

Cranberry Meatballs prove cranberry sauce isn't just for the holidays.

If you're ever in need of a quick appetizer, there's nothing easier than making meatballs! They're always a crowd favorite and such an easy dish to throw together. Sometimes though, I want to change it up a bit. That's when this recipe comes in handy. Every time I make them I get rave reviews. We won't tell anyone it only takes 20 minutes from start to finish to bring these bad boys together.

I usually make meatballs from scratch but I'm certainly not opposed to buying them frozen. Sometimes you just need a little life hack, ya know?

Once you have your meatballs all you need to do is make the cranberry barbecue sauce. Combine the cranberry sauce, barbecue sauce and spices in a skillet and bring to a boil. Once the sauce has reached a boil, reduce heat to a simmer, add the meatballs and cook until heated through, about 10-15 minutes. That's all folks. See how easy that was? Serve them up at your next party and don't forget the toothpicks.



Cranberry Meatballs

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Yield: 55 meatballs

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 bag (32 oz.) store-bought frozen meatballs (or homemade)
- 1 can (14 oz.) cranberry sauce
- 1 cup store-bought barbecue sauce (or our homemade barbecue sauce in our BBQ Meatball recipe)
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper

1. Make meatballs according to the package instructions, or make homemade.
2. In a skillet, add the cranberry sauce, barbecue sauce, cumin, smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat. Add meatballs and simmer, uncovered, until heated through, about 10-15 minutes.

Sweet and Sour Meatballs

By Sam Ellis

You've never tasted meatballs like these Sweet and Sour Meatballs. Perfect for a last-minute appetizer or easy weeknight dinner, your friends and family will rave about them.

Meatballs are one of my favorite dishes to serve as an appetizer. They're easy to keep warm (and hold up well) in a slow cooker and have endless possibilities of flavors that are sure to be a crowd-pleaser. Seriously, it's hard to choose just one recipe to make when you have so many delicious options in this ebook. (I hear you! Totally agree. We should make a variety of them for our next party.)

I have a new twist that is irresistibly different. In fact, my mouth is watering just thinking about them. These Sweet and Sour Meatballs are just the thing when you want to add some bold flavor.



The sauce has a fruity flavor with tang from the pineapple juice and vinegar while brown sugar brings a nice molasses-y sweetness that tones down the acidic bite and brings a perfect balance to it. You can use the sauce on pretty much any protein or veggie so be sure to tuck this recipe away for when you need a new dinner idea. (Chicken and stir-fry veggies, anyone?)

One of my favorite kitchen hacks is to keep frozen store-bought cocktail-sized meatballs on hand because they make such an easy last-minute family dinner or party app when I don't feel like making my own. They're small enough that you can microwave them a couple minutes to warm them up or or you can place them in the sauce to heat through. Just be sure to stir occasionally to ensure an even coating on the meatballs as well as to not scorch the bottom of the sauce. Just like that, you have a party app.

Sweet and Sour Meatballs

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Yield: 64 meatballs

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup pineapple juice
1/4 cup ketchup
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tbsp. cornstarch
1 Tbsp. water
64 (1/2 oz.) meatballs

1. In a large sauce pan, mix together pineapple juice, ketchup, brown sugar, vinegar and soy sauce. Bring to a boil then lower heat to a simmer.
2. In a small bowl, mix together cornstarch and water to create a slurry. Add this to the sauce mixture and stir. Allow to simmer 5 minutes to thicken.
3. Add meatballs to mixture and stir to coat. Cover and simmer 15 minutes until meatballs are warmed through, stirring occasionally.

Slow Cooker Meatballs

By Tawnie Kroll

Prep your meatballs in the evening then throw them in the slow cooker the next morning for an easy weeknight meal.

Slow cooker meatballs are a crowd-pleaser for a party, or even if you'd just like spaghetti and meatballs with the family for an easy weeknight dinner. It's one thing to buy frozen meatballs and toss them in the slow cooker with a tasty sauce, but there is something so special about making meatballs from scratch. There's always an extra touch of love added when making this traditional dish (or maybe that love is an extra dash of salt or other favorite seasoning!)

Meatballs tend to be a little intimidating for some, right? But the reality is they are easy-peasy when you follow our steps for making them, which you can find at the beginning of this book, and any cook, new to the kitchen or seasoned, can make a delicious meatball. Especially the melt in your mouth slow cooker kind. You just need to know a few fundamentals and you'll be set.

When I make meatballs I always like to mix 2 different types of ground meat. For this recipe, I chose ground turkey and ground Italian sausage. The turkey is a great lean protein and the sausage gives the meatball extra flavor. You may use ground beef if you prefer that over the turkey.

The next key step in homemade meatballs is choosing the right seasonings. I may be biased but I think the combination of condiments and seasonings in this recipe make the best meatball you'll ever experience.

When it comes to slow cooker meatballs, an important step is to brown the meatballs in the oven or on the stove before placing them in the slow cooker. I brown them for 5 minutes on each side then let the slow cooker do the work for the rest of the day. You can enjoy these meatballs as an appetizer or with a side salad and spaghetti. The choice is yours.



Slow Cooker Meatballs

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Yield: 22-28 meatballs

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 4 hours

Total Time: 4 hours 20 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground turkey
1 lb. ground Italian sausage
1 and 1/2 jars (36 oz.)
 marinara
1/2 cup Italian breadcrumbs
1/3 cup finely chopped white
 onion
2 large eggs
2 Tbsp. whole milk
2 Tbsp. ketchup
1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. In a large bowl, whisk breadcrumbs, milk and eggs together. Add in ground turkey, sausage and onion and mix together with clean hands. Make a well in the center of the meat mixture and add in ketchup, Dijon, Worcestershire, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper and incorporate well using your hands. Don't over-mix.
2. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. Roll meat into balls (approximately 2 tablespoon sized balls). Bake in the oven for 5 minutes on one side, flip and bake for another 5 minutes. Pour enough sauce on the bottom of slow cooker to coat the bottom, then place meatballs in. Pour remaining marinara sauce over meatballs, cover with lid, and cook on low for 4-6 hours.

Meatball Sub Recipe

By Tawnie Kroll

Meatball Subs are so much better with this simple hack and everyone will thank you for less mess.

What's better than meatballs with marinara sauce and melted cheese on toasted French bread topped with sautéed onions and bell peppers? Not much if you ask me and, more importantly, my family.

Classic meatball subs are a popular sandwich on many Italian restaurant menus but how often do we dismiss it in favor of other dishes?

I know I never order a meatball sub because I worry it's going to be delivered to me with soggy bread or it'll fall apart while I eat it. Plus, it seems so simple. "I could just make this at home!" But I never did. Now I do, ever since I discovered a simple hack to make meatball subs more delicious than ever, and stay intact.



The first thing to know about a good meatball sub is to start with a good meatball that has the perfect combination of seasonings so I'm sharing our family recipe with you.

You can use this meatball recipe for your sandwiches, of course, but you may also want to use them in spaghetti and meatballs or make Slow Cooker Meatballs with them. Sometimes I even make meatloaf using this recipe. (If you need a gluten-free option you can use gluten-free rolls and a batch of our Gluten-free Meatballs.)

And about that hack I promised. It's so simple but makes a world of difference: layer approximately 1 ounce of mozzarella cheese on the French bread you will use for the sandwich and broil it in the oven for 1-2 minutes before serving. This small step before layering the meatballs on the sub not only prevents your sandwich from getting soggy so fast (the melted cheese adds a protective layer), it also helps the meatballs and other ingredients stick and stay in place, AND it adds another layer of flavor to the sandwich. Make sure you serve immediately.

Meatball Sub Recipe

Continued from previous page

Yield: 8 sandwiches

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

Meatballs

Meatballs (use these or buy frozen meatballs and prepare according to package directions)
1/2 cup Italian breadcrumbs
2 large eggs
2 Tbsp. whole milk
1 lb. ground turkey
1 lb. ground Italian sausage
1/3 cup white onion, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. ketchup
1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
Salt and pepper to taste
cooking spray
36 oz. marinara sauce

Sandwich

3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 green bell pepper, sliced into 1/2 inch strips
1 red bell pepper, sliced into 1/2 inch strips
1/2 white onion, sliced
8 sandwich-sized French rolls
8 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl whisk breadcrumbs, eggs and milk together. Add in ground turkey, sausage and onion and mix together with clean hands. Make a well in the center of the meat mixture and add in ketchup, Dijon, Worcestershire, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper and incorporate well with clean hands.
2. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. Roll meat into balls (2 tablespoon-sized balls). Bake in the oven for 10 minutes on each side or until they reach an internal temperature of 165°F.
3. In a large bowl, mix meatballs together with marinara sauce. Heat olive oil on stove over medium heat in a frying pan and sauté onions and bell peppers for approximately 10 minutes.
4. On each roll, sprinkle a thin layer of cheese on the bottom then layer a few meatballs on bread and top the sandwich with onions, bell peppers and additional cheese. Enjoy immediately.

NOTE: To prevent soggy bread you can toast the bread with cheese on it in the oven on broil for 1-2 minutes to get it nice and warm with melted cheese.



Copycat IKEA Swedish Meatballs

By Tawnie Kroll

These copycat IKEA Swedish Meatballs are easy enough for your family to indulge in any day without dragging them all to the store.

Classic Swedish Meatballs are a comforting yet nutritious meal to enjoy when hosting a dinner party or a night in with family or friends. Best of all, everyone will love you for making them. Who knew you could make this IKEA favorite at home?

Sure, you can buy a bag of them frozen but we're showing you that they're not as intimidating or hard to make as one may think. All you need are the right spices and an easy way to make the sauce. (We also recommend buying a jar of lingonberry jam to serve on the side.)

The meat used in a typical Swedish meatball is a combination of ground pork and ground beef, which is what I used in this recipe. This meat duo is incredibly flavorful and makes the perfect meatball, especially paired with the sauce.

Copycat IKEA Swedish Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Speaking of sauce, I told you I have an easy way to make it. One shortcut you can take is using condensed cream of mushroom soup if you are anxious about making the sauce from scratch. However, I am sharing just how easy it is to make the sauce/gravy from scratch for that authentic Swedish meatball flavor. Really, all you need to know how to do is whisk together the butter and flour to make the roux and slowly add in the liquids being used. (By the way, I recommend using a flat whisk when making roux. You'll be amazed at the difference it makes).

In this recipe we use heavy cream. Just go with it. No skimping because you simply won't get the right consistency and flavor if you use milk.

Serve over egg noodles and garnish with parsley then serve to your family and watch their excitement over enjoying their favorite copycat IKEA meal at home.

Copycat IKEA Swedish Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Yield: 28-30 meatballs

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs

2 large eggs

2 Tbsp. milk

1 lb. ground pork

1 lb. ground beef

1/2 tsp. white pepper

1/2 tsp. granulated garlic

1/4 tsp. allspice

1 tsp. salt

3 Tbsp. unsalted butter,
divided

2 Tbsp. flour

1 and 1/2 cups heavy cream

1/4 cup beef broth

Parsley for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 200°F. In a medium sized mixing bowl, whisk together panko breadcrumbs with eggs and milk. Then with clean hands, mix in ground pork, ground beef, white pepper, garlic, allspice and salt. Mix well and roll into golf ball sized meatballs.
2. In a large frying pan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter and place half of the meatballs in the hot pan, about 1 inch apart from each other. Cook on one side for 3-4 minutes and then flip. You can hold the handle of the pan to push the meatballs around to roll them instead of having to flip them individually. (This helps to retain their shape). Once the meatballs are cooked through, put them on a baking sheet in the oven to keep them warm while you cook the second batch of meatballs. After each batch, de-glaze your pan with 1/4 cup cold water to clean the little bits of meat up. Reserve this liquid each time to use for your gravy in the next step.
3. When you have finished cooking the second batch of meatballs, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter in the pan. Take it off of the heat. Add the flour and whisk to form a roux (a thick smooth paste). While continuing to whisk, drizzle in the reserved deglazing liquid. Gradually pour heavy cream in, about 1/4 cup at a time, whisk until smooth before adding 1/4 cup more. Repeat until cream is gone. Then whisk in beef broth. Return pan to heat and cook over medium until it comes to a simmer. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed. Combine meatballs and gravy then serve over egg noodles. Garnish with parsley, if desired.

Italian Meatballs vs. Swedish Meatballs

By Kevin Kessler

Swedish Meatballs and Classic Italian-style Meatballs go head to head. Are they really that different?

Meatballs are one of the most versatile foods on the planet. Almost every culture on Earth has some form of meat shaped into a ball or patty in their culinary repertoire.

Here in America, the two most popular variations of meatballs are “Italian” meatballs, aka Classic Italian-style Meatballs, and Swedish Meatballs. I put Italian in quotes because the meatballs we all know and love, slathered in marinara and served alongside pasta on Sunday nights, is actually an American creation. True Italian meatballs are known as polpettes and are quite different from their American cousins. (For more information on that, check out our earlier post on the history of meatballs).



Swedish meatballs are swanky, small and flavorful. I’m not ashamed to admit I’ve gone to IKEA once or twice with no intention of buying furniture – I just went for the meatballs. I’m pretty excited that I can make those at home now that I have a recipe for Copycat Ikea Meatballs. But while these family favorites might look similar, they have a startling number of differences. I’ve outlined these variances below in what I call “The Four S’s of Meatballs”.

The 4 S’s of Meatballs

Size

In America, we have this mentality of “bigger is always better.” This rings true in our meatball preparation. Italian American meatballs tend to be far larger than their Swedish counterparts. I’ve seen them range in size from that of tennis balls to an adult human fist. On the other hand, Swedish meatballs are super small, which is what makes it so easy to eat 100 of them in one sitting. They’re typically no larger than golf balls, and can fit comfortably on a teaspoon.

Italian Meatballs vs. Swedish Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Sauce

A huge part of a meatball's taste comes from what you douse it in. Italian Americans turned to tomato-based sauces, typically chunky. Marinara sauce is a favorite for the Sunday dinner tables of Nonas all over the country while Swedish meatballs are cooked in a roux-based gravy that boasts a rich and savory taste. This slightly creamy brown sauce is typically prepared with beef or bone broth and sour cream or heavy cream.

Seasoning

You can't just roll meat into a ball and serve it up in sauce. You have to give it some love with seasoning and other ingredients meant to enhance the natural flavor of the meat. Both these dishes mix in onions or onion powder, but that is where the similarities end. Italian Americans like to infuse their meatballs with garlic and chopped parsley. Grated Parmesan cheese is also a regular addition to the mix. I personally use some ricotta cheese as well to give it a creamier taste. I used sun-dried tomatoes once, but that's a story for another time. Swedish meatballs have a far more diverse family of spices working together within them. Some combination of allspice, nutmeg, ground ginger and white pepper are typically used in their creation.

Serving

Perhaps the greatest difference between Italian American meatballs and Swedish meatballs is how they are served. Italian Americans serve up meatballs as part of a main course, typically served up with a side of pasta, and maybe another meat like a sweet sausage or neck bones. One of the most popular uses of meatballs (and my personal favorite) comes in the form of a meatball Parmesan sandwich. Swedish meatballs are the quintessential appetizer. When I arrive at a cocktail party and see trays of Swedish meatballs with little tooth picks in them, I know it's going to be a good time. This serving style is due in part to their small size, which makes them a perfect light bite to enjoy over some drinks. That is not to say that Swedish meatballs don't have a place on the dinner table. They can also be served over German-style egg noodles or potatoes for a truly awesome entrée experience.

Where do your meatball allegiances lie? Are you a fan of Classic Italian-style Meatballs, or are Swedish Meatballs your thing? Personally, we say there's room for both.



Italian Meatball Soup

By Ellie O'Brien

A bowl of easy Italian Meatball Soup is just what your family needs this week.

Italian Meatball Soup, not to be confused with its slightly high maintenance cousin, Italian wedding soup, is a healthy and hearty meal you can get on the table in half an hour. 30 minutes?! Now, that's what I call low maintenance.

The key to a quick and easy Italian meatball soup is utilizing your pantry. Do you have dried pasta? Of course you do. Do you have frozen veggies? Absolutely. Did you freeze these Classic Italian-style Meatballs last time you made them? Well, maybe you didn't... but store-bought frozen meatballs will do the trick just as well.

Praise the pantry gods who make weeknight dinners a breeze. But seriously, this recipe is as easy as "throw a whole bunch of pantry items in a pot, simmer and enjoy."

Italian Meatball Soup

Continued from previous page

Plus, Italian Meatball Soup is packed with protein, veggies and tons of flavor. Sounds like the perfect well-balanced family dinner, right?

Looking for more quick soup recipes? We've got you covered here with some great classics and interesting twists, all ready in under 15 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups water

2 (14 oz.) cans diced
tomatoes

1 (32 oz.) container beef broth

1 tsp. Italian seasoning

2 cups frozen mixed
vegetables

1 lb. frozen cooked Italian-
style meatballs

1 cup dried pasta

1/4 cup grated Parmesan
cheese

1. Stir water, tomatoes, beef broth and Italian seasoning together in a large pot. Bring to a boil.
2. Add vegetables, meatballs and pasta to the pot. Return broth to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low and cook until the meatballs are heated through and the pasta is tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Ladle soup into bowls and top with Parmesan cheese.

Easiest Meatballs Ever

By Ellie O'Brien

Here it is, the easiest meatball recipe ever. You won't believe how simple (and delicious!) these are.

A quick Google search for “easy meatball recipe” will yield over 30 million results. 30 MILLION! Do you know what's not easy? Sorting through 30 million results to find the one you're looking for.

The good news is that I've done the hard work - sorting through recipes, researching, testing different methods - and have come up with the easiest (and tastiest) meatball recipe ever.

There are two key factors when it comes to ease - how easy the recipe is to prepare (quick method, no obscure ingredients) and ease of cleanup. I'd argue that ease of cleanup is just as important as preparation. Life's too busy to spend a ton of time cleaning up the kitchen.

Let's start with the preparation. These meatballs require only 8 ingredients, which includes salt and pepper. All 8 of those ingredients get dumped into one bowl at the same time and mixed together. And the easiest part of it all? We use a cookie scoop to evenly scoop out the meatballs and place them right on a parchment lined baking sheet. No dirty hands here.

Which leads us to cleanup. Toss out that parchment paper and you're DONE. Easy meatballs for the win and one of your family's favorite meals can be served up in no time.



Easiest Meatballs Ever

Continued from previous page

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef

1 large egg

1/2 cup breadcrumbs

1/2 cup grated Parmesan
cheese

1/3 cup finely chopped onion

1/4 cup minced Italian parsley
(optional)

1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add all ingredients into a large bowl and mix until combined. You can do this with a large spoon or with your hands. Don't over-mix.
3. Using a cookie scoop (approximately 1 inch in diameter), scoop out the meatballs onto the parchment paper.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 165°F on an instant read thermometer.



One Ingredient Sausage Meatballs

By Ellie O'Brien

This simple kitchen hack means your family can have homemade meatballs no matter how busy your day is.

Not gonna lie, homemade meatballs are definitely better than the store bought variety, but boy are there a lot of ingredients. Between the ground meat and breadcrumbs, eggs and spices, my grocery list quickly goes from 0-60 mph in 3 seconds flat. But what if I said you could make homemade meatballs with ONE ingredient? You're interested, right? I thought so.

The only ingredient you need for these is Italian sausage links. That's it!

All you need to do is slice open the casing of each sausage link, use your hands to squeeze out 1/3 of the link and roll it into a ball. Repeat until done.

Then you pan fry the meatballs or bake them until they are browned on all sides and cooked through.

One Ingredient Sausage Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Homemade sausage meatballs for the win. The hardest part of this meal is deciding what type of pasta to serve them with but I bet even that's easy since you probably have a box of your family's favorite pasta on hand already. Seriously! You are going to love these because when your family begs for them every week you know dinner's gonna be ready in no time.

Yield: 3 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. sausage links

1. If following baking directions, heat oven to 400°F.
2. Using a sharp knife, slice open the casing of each sausage link. Use your hands to squeeze out 1/3 of the link and roll into a ball. Repeat with remaining sausage until you have formed 9 meatballs.
3. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add meatballs to the pan, turning until all sides are browned and the meatballs are cooked through, about 20 minutes. Serve with your favorite pasta and sauce or freeze for another recipe.



Mozzarella Stuffed Meatballs

By Jamie Silva

The cheesy goodness of mozzarella stuffed meatballs can be our little secret until your family bites into them. Dinner win!

Whether you're looking to jazz up dinner or for a fun party app for your next family gathering, these mozzarella stuffed meatballs are a great idea and they're easy. Making meatballs should never be complicated, even when they are stuffed with cheese so make sure you check out all our tips on how to make the best meatballs following directions we shared earlier in the book so the outside tastes as good as that delicious melty cheesy center.

Get your meatball ingredients into a bowl.

Mix it up using your hands, but don't over mix or it will make the meat tough. Then roll it into golf ball-sized balls.

Mozzarella Stuffed Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Once you roll your ball, flatten it out and add a small ball or piece of mozzarella and shape the meat around it. (One way to cut down on prep time is to buy mini mozzarella balls, which you can find in the specialty cheese department of most grocery stores.)

Then you put them on a baking sheet and bake them. Easy peasy!

You can definitely pan fry these on the stove instead of baking them but here's the thing. I prefer baking them because number one, you can cook larger batches at a time. Larger batches means less time spent cooking, which means more time enjoying meatballs. YES!

Number 2, baking meatballs will still result in a flavorful option since you can sear the outside under the broiler in your oven. You just bake them until they're cooked through and then broil them at the end to get a nice, tasty crust. Choose your own adventure, guys. I'll just be over here baking up a batch of these for my family if you need me for something.

Yield: 15 meatballs

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. ground beef
1/2 lb. ground pork
1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs
1 large egg
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/4 cup finely chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley
Salt and pepper to taste
15 mini fresh mozzarella cheese balls

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In bowl, combine ground beef, ground pork, breadcrumbs, egg, onion, parsley, salt and pepper. Mix thoroughly. Shape the mixture into 1 inch balls and place them on a cutting board. Flatten each meatball, place a mini mozzarella ball in the middle, then roll it back into a ball, making sure the cheese is covered completely. Place on the baking sheet.
3. Bake until no longer pink inside, about 18-20 minutes, then broil on high for another 10 minutes for a deliciously crispy crust. Remove from oven. Serve immediately.

The Best Spaghetti and Meatballs

By Jamie Silva

We're showing you just how easy it is to make everyone's favorite spaghetti and meatballs from scratch.

If you've never made homemade spaghetti and meatballs because you thought it was too time consuming, wait 'til you see what I have in store for you. Making spaghetti and meatballs (not from a can or frozen), is in your future and I can't wait for you to bring this dish to life.

First, be sure to make the BEST, most tender meatballs out there by following our tips on how to make the best meatballs. You'll get perfect results every time. We guarantee it.

Once you form your meatballs, pan fry for about 5 minutes to get a crispy brown exterior. This part adds so much flavor and texture.

Then add the spaghetti sauce and let the meatballs cook through the rest of the way. This is a gentle cooking process which keeps the meatballs juicy and tender. Let them simmer for a while and stir occasionally so they don't scorch to the bottom. Trust me, waiting will be the hardest part as you smell the delicious scent of meatballs and sauce waft through the house, but I promise it will be worth it.

Serve over your family's favorite pasta and don't forget to top your dish with grated Parmesan cheese! Just don't add too much Parm... said no one ever.



The Best Spaghetti and Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Yield: 15 meatballs

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. ground beef

1/2 lb. ground pork

1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs

1 large egg

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

1/4 cup grated Parmesan
cheese plus more for
garnish

1/4 cup finely chopped Italian
flat-leaf parsley

1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. black pepper

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 jar (14 oz.) spaghetti sauce
or make homemade sauce

Cooked spaghetti

1. In bowl, combine ground beef and ground pork, breadcrumbs, egg, onion, Parmesan cheese, parsley, Italian seasoning, garlic, salt and pepper. Mix using your hands but don't over mix or it will make the meat tough.
2. Shape the mixture into 1 inch or 1.5 inch balls.
3. In a skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Pan fry the meatballs until they are browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. Add spaghetti sauce to the meatballs. Simmer, uncovered, for 20-30 minutes or until meatballs are no longer pink inside.
4. Serve meatballs over cooked spaghetti and top with grated Parmesan cheese.

Porcupine Meatballs

By Brittany Poulson

Porcupine meatballs are a family-friendly favorite that combines your protein and starch in one easy dish.

As you can see with all these delicious meatball recipes, they are a go-to dish for party apps, feeding a crowd and for family dinners on busy weeknights. You may even have a favorite meatball dish you remember from growing up - like my memories of these Porcupine Meatballs my mom used to make.

If you've never had them, they get their name from the way they look. Mixing the meatball ingredients with uncooked rice means that once they've cooked, they look similar to the cute, pokey animals they're named after.

The silly name and rice poking out all over the meatball just might be what makes them a favorite for kids, but even as an adult, I still love to eat them. Memories of how much I used to enjoy them makes creating them in my own kitchen even more special.

Since I don't have my mom's recipe, I set out to find the best way to cook porcupine meatballs. There are various methods from pan frying to baking, but the most common one I found was baking them straight in the sauce. This is the easiest method and ensures a moist and perfectly cooked meatball. I also add milk to the meatball mixture because that extra bit of moisture helps the rice cook through even better and makes the meatball more tender.

The actual baking time takes a while, but the prep time is relatively short. You just mix the meatball ingredients together, form them and put them in the baking dish, then whisk up the sauce and pour it over the meatballs before baking.

Whether you are making porcupine meatballs to impress family and friends at a party or just to indulge in some good old fashioned comfort food, your family is sure to be satisfied and warmed from the inside out.



Porcupine Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Yield: 20 meatballs

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients:

For the meatballs:

1 and 1/4 lb. lean ground beef
1/2 cup uncooked rice
1/3 cup minced onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
1/2 cup milk

For the sauce:

2 cans (10.75 oz) condensed
tomato soup
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 cup water
Optional: Parmesan or
mozzarella cheese
Optional: Chopped parsley,
for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray an 8x8 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray and set aside.
2. Combine all the meatball ingredients in a large bowl using your hands. Don't over mix. Form into 20 meatballs and place in prepared baking dish.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together all of the sauce ingredients. Pour over the meatballs in the baking dish. Cover with tin foil and place in the oven. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove the tin foil and continue baking an additional 15 minutes or until the meatballs are fully cooked (reach an internal temperature of 165°F) and the rice inside is tender. Remove from oven.
4. If desired, sprinkle with cheese and garnish with chopped parsley.



Greek Keftedes

By Kelly Nardo

You won't need an excuse to add Greek Keftedes to your menu. One taste of these Greek meatballs and your family will ask for them all the time.

Greek Keftedes, or meatballs, are a staple in Mediterranean cuisine and are often served as part of a meze platter. If you've never heard of a meze platter, it's a Mediterranean snack tray that is generally served as an appetizer before the main meal.

Greek Keftedes are different from traditional American meatballs as they are lightly dusted in flour before frying which creates a light crust while keeping the meatball juicy inside. Instead of serving them in a traditional Italian sauce or a gravy, they are served unsauced with tzatziki sauce on the side. You dip the meatballs in the tzatziki rather than having the sauce poured over top. (You can grab our recipe for [Homemade Tzatziki Sauce here](#).)

Greek Keftedes

Continued from previous page

You can use a variety of ground meat for the mixture, but including fresh mint is key to giving them their authentic flavor. The longer you let the meat marinate, the better the flavors incorporate.

I highly doubt you'll have leftovers but if you do they are traditionally used to create a new dish with a tomato-based sauce and orzo or they're added to soup.

Yield: 40 meatballs

Prep Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef
1/2 lb. ground pork
1/2 cup breadcrumbs
1 large egg
1 small red onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup packed fresh parsley, chopped
8 large mint leaves, chopped
1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup flour, for rolling
2-3 Tbsp. oil, for frying

1. In a large mixing bowl, add ground beef, ground pork, breadcrumbs, egg, red onion, garlic, parsley, mint, olive oil, oregano and salt. Mix well until combined, but try not to over work the meat or else it will get tough. Cover with a lid and place in the refrigerator for an hour or more to let the flavors marinate.
2. Put flour into a shallow bowl. Remove meat mixture from the refrigerator and use a tablespoon as a scoop to form into small meatballs. Roll meatballs in the flour, making sure they are completely covered, and shake off any excess.
3. Preheat oven to 200°F.
4. Heat a large cast iron or heavy-duty skillet over medium heat. Add oil and let it get hot. Place some meatballs in a single layer, spreading out evenly, and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and cooked through. You will probably have to do this in 2-3 batches depending on how big your pan is. As you cook subsequent batches, put already cooked meatballs on a cookie sheet in the oven to stay warm.

Chinese Meatballs

By Kelly Nardo

If your family loves Chinese food this meatball change-up is sure to become a family favorite.

Everyone loves Spaghetti and Meatballs but sometimes you want something just a little lighter. That's when you need these Chinese Meatballs.

Chinese meatballs, usually called Lion's Head, are light, tender and juicy meatballs with a savory flavor. They are very juicy due to the use of pork, which is a fattier meat, along with the technique of steaming them to help keep the juices inside the meatballs.

Traditionally, they are made with water chestnuts since they are cheap and bulk up the meatballs so you don't need as much meat. The water chestnuts, ginger, scallion and soy sauce add that great flavor you would expect from Chinese food, but in meatball form.

If you're looking to change up your typical meatball, try these Chinese meatballs for a light and savory twist. They go great eaten with the broth they are cooked in or serve them over white rice or soba noodles for a hearty family dinner.



Chinese Meatballs

Continued from previous page

Yield: 14 meatballs

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Total Time: 50 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground pork

1/2 cup water chestnuts,
diced

1/4 cup chopped scallion

1 large egg

2 Tbsp. soy sauce

1 Tbsp. sesame oil

1 Tbsp. sugar

1-2 Tbsp. corn starch

1 tsp. grated ginger

1/2 tsp. salt

1-2 Tbsp. oil, for frying

Chicken broth, for steaming

1. In a large mixing bowl add ground pork, water chestnuts, scallion, egg, soy sauce, sesame oil, sugar, 1 tablespoon corn starch, ginger and salt. Mix well until combined. Mixture should be wet, but you should still be able to form into balls. If needed add more corn starch. Cover with a lid and place in the refrigerator 5-10 minutes to firm up. Remove meat mixture from the refrigerator and use an ice cream scoop to form into large meatballs.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add oil and let it get hot. Add some of the meatballs in a single layer, spreading out evenly, and cook for 3-5 minutes, flipping occasionally, until golden brown on the outside (they will still be raw on the inside). Once browned, remove from pan and place on a towel-lined plate. You might have to do this in 2-3 batches depending on how big your pan is.
3. In a large stock pot, add meatballs. Pour in chicken broth, just enough to cover the meatballs, and bring to a boil. Turn heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes or until meatballs are cooked through. Serve with some of the cooking broth.



Spanish Albóndigas

By Emily Dingmann

When you want to add some Spanish flavor to your family's traditional meatball dinner, Spanish Albóndigas are the way to go.

We went on a search for the very best way to make albóndigas and quickly found out there are two very different dishes when it comes to albóndigas. There is the traditional Mexican soup featuring meatballs, referred to as albóndigas, and then there is the Spanish meatball, also referred to as albóndigas.

Spanish albóndigas are meatballs that are cooked in a thick, smoked paprika sauce and you'll find them served in most tapas bars across Spain. Of course, we found many different versions of Spanish albóndigas so we researched different recipes to see what they all had in common with each other. With all the variations the sauce's flavor profile remained the same – slightly spicy and a tad smoky, which pairs perfectly with the rich flavor of ground beef.

Spanish Albondigas

Continued from previous page

These meatballs are best served with crusty bread as you don't want to leave behind any of the smoky sauce that smothers them. Mmmmmm.

Yield: 30 meatballs

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 egg
1 lb. ground beef (we used
20% lean, 80% fat)
3 cloves minced garlic,
divided
1/4 cup breadcrumbs, like
panko
Salt
Black pepper
2 tsp. smoked paprika,
divided
2 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
1 cup diced fresh tomatoes
(like roma)
1/2 cup tomato paste
1/4 cup red wine
1 tsp. red pepper flakes
1 Tbsp. honey
1/4 cup chopped fresh
cilantro (optional)

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the egg until beaten. Add the ground beef, 1 of the garlic cloves and breadcrumbs. Season with 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 1/4 teaspoon of black pepper and 1 teaspoon of the smoked paprika. Lightly mix together with hands until incorporated, but be careful not to over mix. Roll into 3/4 - 1 inch balls - you should have about 30 of them.
2. Heat large pan over medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to pan. Cooking in batches so you don't overcrowd pan, brown the meatballs for about 7 minutes, rotating frequently to brown on all sides. Transfer browned meatballs to plate and set aside. Repeat with remaining meatballs. When meatballs are finished, wipe out grease with paper towel.
3. To the same pan, add the remaining teaspoon of smoked paprika, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, tomatoes, tomato paste, red wine, red pepper flakes and honey. Bring to a boil over medium high heat stirring occasionally. Turn heat to low. Add meatballs to pan and stir carefully to cover with sauce. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until meatballs are cooked through, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with chopped cilantro if desired.

Mexican Albóndigas Soup

By Emily Dingmann

Mexican Albóndigas is a traditional Mexican soup that will quickly become a family favorite.

Like many traditional recipes, albóndigas is one that has slight variations from family to family, but the bones are the same: a broth-based soup with lots of chopped vegetables and always meatballs. (Spanish Albóndigas, on the other hand are a very different dish).

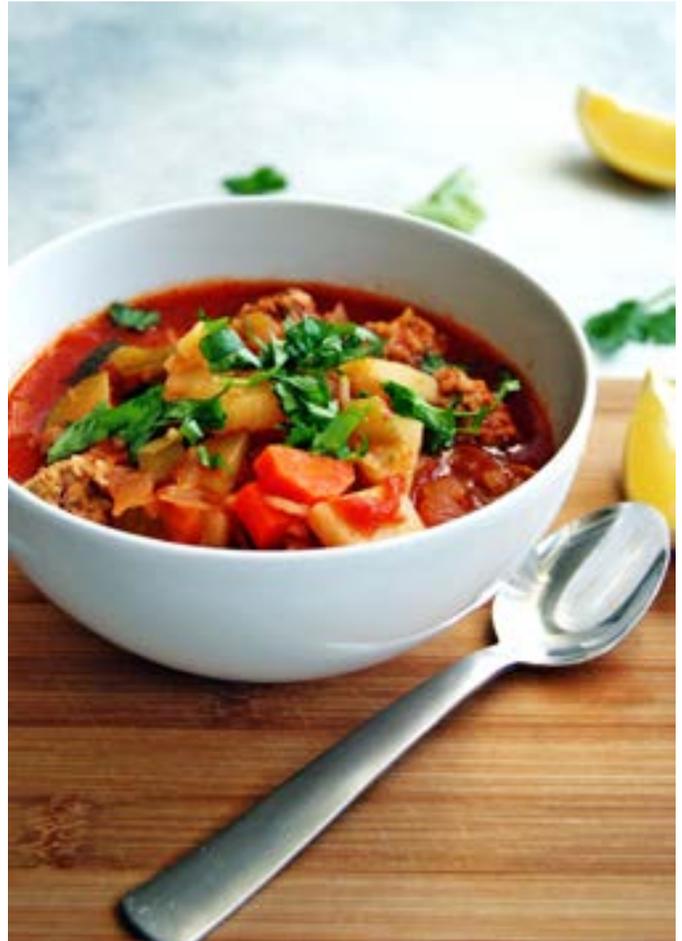
Some make the meatballs with a mix of pork and beef; others use all beef. Some include chayote or green pepper while others keep it basic with onion, celery, carrots and zucchini. Some cook the rice a bit before putting them into the meatballs, but most form the meatballs with uncooked rice.

Yes, adding uncooked rice actually works (as we learned when making Porcupine Meatballs), and it's pretty amazing. The rice takes the place of the breadcrumbs in these

meatballs. Some of the rice will end up in the soup, but most of it cooks right in the meatball.

We tried a few different ingredient variations during our research: all beef vs. a mixture of pork and beef in the meatballs, celery vs. green pepper and diced tomatoes vs. a combination of diced tomatoes and tomato sauce. All this is to say that this soup is flexible. Use what you have, use what you love - it's bound to work. Finish the bowl off with a squeeze of lemon (not lime - using lemon was the one constant we found in this dish) and some chopped cilantro.

Mexican Albóndigas is definitely a comfort food, but a light and flavorful one that you'll be happy to eat for days if your family doesn't gobble it all up in one meal.



Mexican Albóndigas Soup

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Yield: 3 and 1/2 quarts

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 50 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1 large egg

1/2 lb. ground beef (20% lean, 80% fat)

1/2 lb. ground pork

1/2 cup white rice

1 clove minced garlic

1 tsp. cumin

1 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp black pepper

1 Tbsp. olive oil

1 medium russet potato, peeled and chopped (about 2 cups)

1 medium white onion, chopped (about 1 and 1/2 cups)

3 medium carrots, chopped (about 1 cup)

1 green pepper, chopped (about 1 and 1/2 cups)

1 medium zucchini, chopped (about 1 and 1/2 cups)

1 box (32 oz.) chicken or vegetable broth

2 cups water

1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes

1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce

Lemon and cilantro for serving

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the egg until beaten. Add the ground beef, ground pork, rice and garlic. Season with cumin, salt and pepper. Lightly mix together with hands until incorporated, being careful not to over mix. Roll into 3/4 - 1 inch balls - you should have about 30-35 of them. Set aside.
2. Heat large stock pot over medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add potatoes, onion and carrots to pot. Cook for 5 minutes stirring occasionally then add green pepper and zucchini to pot. Cook for 3-4 more minutes, stirring occasionally. Add broth, water, diced tomatoes and tomato sauce to pot and bring to a boil.
3. Carefully add meatballs into pot, stirring so they are all submerged, and lower heat to medium-low. Simmer for about 20-25 minutes, until rice is tender and meatballs are cooked through. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Finish with a squeeze of lemon and top with chopped cilantro.

Contributors

Many thanks to our writers for this edition of The Cookful.



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Christine is the Founder and Senior Editor of The Cookful. She also blogs at COOKtheSTORY where she specializes in easy healthy homemade recipes. Healthiness aside, she has been known to shred cheese onto a dinner plate, microwave it for 30 seconds, and then eat the messy goop with a spoon.



Heather McCurdy, editor

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Heather McCurdy is an editor and the food and travel blogger behind Real: The Kitchen and Beyond where she encourages readers to savor life around the table and on the road with any budget. She loves fresh produce, dark chocolate, and a good stout. The worst meal she ever ate was liver and onions her dad said would make a great childhood birthday dinner. Heather is also on the editorial team at The Cookful and is a supporting editor for this ebook.

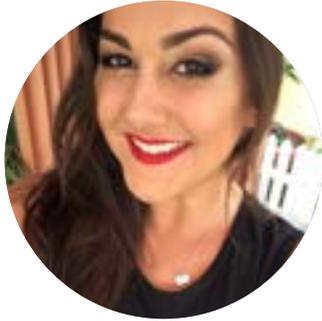


Kevin J. Kessler

Kevin J. Kessler is an experienced professional writer and published author living in Orlando Florida. With a lifelong passion for food, this sandwich loving Italian boy enjoys exploring unanswered questions about the foods we all know and love so well. Kevin's foodie lifestyle was born through his love of Walt Disney World and the Epcot International Food and Wine Festival. A lover of stories, he enjoys trying new dishes from all over the world and learning everything there is to know about where food comes from, how it's prepared, and what variations on it exist.

Contributors

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Jamie is the blogger behind A Sassy Spoon, where she inspires you to celebrate the good things in life - food and travel! She shares accessible recipes ranging from easy everyday dishes, party food, and Cuban-inspired meals, as well as entertaining ideas and fun travel guides. Whether on a road trip or in the kitchen, she's always thinking of her next recipe, next party, or next trip.



Allie McDonald

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Allie is an avocado obsessed, hot pepper junky with a serious passion for food. When she isn't adding to her cowgirl boot collection, you can find her in the kitchen, with her apron covered in the day's creations. She's the blogger behind Miss Allie's Kitchen, a food blog dedicated to creating whole and healthy recipes to inspire home cooks.



Sam Ellis

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Sam blogs at The Culinary Compass where she loves to try new recipes and ingredients from around the world. She thinks trying new dishes and spices is the easiest way to travel! She loves coffee so much that she often goes to bed excited for a fresh cup in the morning.



Tawnie Kroll

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Tawnie Kroll is a California based food blogger and healthy recipe developer. She is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and a lover of cooking and baking! Follow her blog for recipes, healthy living tips and practical scientific evidenced based advice to help you improve your health and wellbeing.

Contributors

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Ellie O'Brien

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When not working full time as an engineer, you can find Ellie in her kitchen and blogging at Hungry by Nature. Her approach to food is simple – eat healthy, whole, natural foods and always leave room for dessert! While seasonal, healthy foods are a top priority, Ellie has also been known to eat ice cream for dinner. It's all about balance!



Brittany Poulson

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As a self-proclaimed foodie, Brittany loves to cook, bake and of course, eat! This love of food led her to become a registered dietitian and food blogger at Your Choice Nutrition, where she encourages you to live a healthy life in your unique way. For Brittany, this often includes her favorite foods, such as fresh strawberries or a square of dark chocolate!



Kelly Nardo

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Kelly is the girl behind Eat the Gains, a food and fitness blog dedicated to providing wholesome and delicious recipes that fuel both workouts and everyday life. She is also a CrossFit coach and helps people with meal prep in Austin, TX. Her favorite color is orange and she has never met a vegetable she didn't like – if you know, send it her way!



Emily Dingmann

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Emily is a nutritionist and mom who wants to help families eat real food! She is the creator of A Nutritionist Eats, where she shares simple and nutritious, family-friendly recipes ready in 30 minutes or less. She drinks coffee in the morning, wine at night, and sometimes a green juice in between.

About The Cookful

Do you love to geek-out over food and cooking? Then The Cookful is where you need to be.

We cook and write about one topic at a time, diving in deep to help you cook (and eat!) better than ever. Each topic comes with How-Tos, innovative recipes and a bunch of interesting tidbits so that you can learn all about it. Some topics we've covered are Margaritas, Quick Soups and Popcorn. Head over to [The Cookful](#) to find out what our next topic is and then get ready to go off the deep end with us.



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