

Italian Meatballs (Extra Soft and Juicy!)

Recipe video above. These are my idea of "perfect" meatballs. I make them extra soft and juicy by using bread instead of breadcrumbs, and the grated onion is my secret tip for adding extra flavour into this. Plus, no need to sauté diced onion before mixing it in! Served with a rich tomato sauce made extra tasty by cooking it in the same pan that the meatballs are browned in.



4.95 from 314 votes

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time
20 mins	20 mins	40 mins

Course: Meatballs, Pasta **Cuisine:** Italian **Keyword:** Italian Meatballs **Servings:** 4 - 5

Calories: 442cal **Author:** Nagi | RecipeTin Eats

Ingredients

Meatballs

- 1 lightly packed cup of diced white sandwich bread , crusts removed (Note 1 for SUB)
- 1 small onion (brown, white or yellow)
- 14 oz / 400 g ground beef (mince)
- 3 oz / 100g ground pork (mince), or sub with more beef (Note 2)
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley , finely chopped (Note 3)
- 2 garlic cloves , minced
- 1/4 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano (or parmesan), freshly grated
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

Cooking Meatballs & Sauce

- 2.5 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves , minced
- 3/4 cup onion , finely chopped (white, brown or yellow)
- 24 oz / 700 g tomato passata (Tomato Puree in US/CAN - Note 4)
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (chili flakes)
- 3 tsp dried Italian herb mix (parsley, basil, thyme, oregano)
- 1 tsp salt
- Black pepper

To Serve

- Pasta of choice
- Parmesan
- Parsley , finely chopped (optional)

Instructions

1. Grate the onion using a standard box grater in a large bowl until you have about 1/2 cup of grated onion and juices.
2. Add bread, mix to combine so the onion juice soaks the bread and disintegrates. Set aside while you prep the other ingredients (5 min or so).
3. Add all the remaining Meatball ingredients. Use hands to mix well.
4. Measure out a heaped tablespoon and roll lightly to form a ball. Repeat with remaining

mixture. (Note 5)

5. Heat 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil in a large non stick fry pan over medium high heat. Add the meatballs and brown all over - about 3 - 4 minutes.
6. When they are browned but NOT cooked through, carefully transfer them onto a plate.

Cooking & Sauce:

1. Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil into the fry pan.
2. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes until translucent. Add the remaining Sauce ingredients. Bring to a simmer, then turn down to medium low so it bubbles gently rather than splattering everywhere.
3. Carefully transfer the meatballs and any juices that have pooled on the plate into the Sauce.
4. Cook the meatballs for 8 - 10 minutes, turning and stirring occasionally. Adjust Sauce salt and pepper to taste.
5. While the meatballs are cooking, cook your pasta of choice.
6. Serve the meatballs on pasta, garnished with extra parmesan and parsley if using.

Notes

1. Bread - Plain white sandwich bread is best for this, but you can substitute with other breads. Tear or chop into small pieces, do not include the crust. Slightly stale bread is fine.

Substitute with 1/2 cup Panko breadcrumbs. Meatballs won't be quite as soft, but still very tender!

2. Meat - Pork is slightly fattier than beef so it helps make these extra juicy and gives it a slightly richer flavour. Feel free to just use 1 lb / 500 g beef mince which is what I do on ordinary nights, or use other ground/mince meat of choice.

3. Herbs - You can substitute with 1 1/2 tbsp dried parsley, or a mix of equal amounts of dried oregano, thyme, basil and parsley. You could also use an Italian herb mix if you wanted to.

4. Tomato passata is just pureed, strained tomatoes, sometimes labelled Tomato Puree in the US and Canada (here's a photo of Mutti Tomato Passata sold at Walmart, high quality Italian brand). Readily available in Australian supermarkets nowadays, alongside pasta sauces. If you can't find it, puree canned tomatoes or use crushed canned tomatoes.

5. How I roll meatballs - see video/photos in post.

6. Baking Option: Place a rack on a tray. Spray rack well with oil, place meatballs on rack, spray with oil. Bake at 200C/400F for 20 minutes until nicely browned, then simmer in the sauce for a few minutes to bring the flavours together.

7. Nutrition per serving assuming 5 servings, meatballs only.

Nutrition Facts

Italian Meatballs (Extra Soft and Juicy!)

Amount Per Serving (307 g)

Calories 442 Calories from Fat 198

% Daily Value*

Fat 22g **34%**

Saturated Fat 7g **44%**

Cholesterol 125mg **42%**

Sodium 1552mg **67%**

Potassium 1127mg **32%**

Carbohydrates 26g **9%**

Fiber 5g **21%**

Sugar 11g **12%**

Protein 34g **68%**

Vitamin A 1000IU **20%**

Vitamin C 27.6mg **33%**

Calcium 214mg **21%**

Iron 6.3mg **35%**

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

Originally published August 2015. Updated with new photos, video and commentary in August 2018. No change to recipe - I wouldn't dare!

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