

Mini Turkey Meatballs

Ingredients:

1 small onion, grated
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 large egg
1/4 cup dried bread crumbs
3 tablespoons ketchup
1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves
1/4 cup grated Parmesan
1/4 cup grated Pecorino Romano
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 pound ground dark turkey meat
3 tablespoons olive oil
26 ounces Simple Tomato Sauce (recipe follows),
or store-bought marinara sauce

Simple Tomato Sauce:

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 (32-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
4 to 6 basil leaves
2 dried bay leaves
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, optional

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Directions:

Add the onion, garlic, egg, bread crumbs, ketchup, parsley, Parmesan, Pecorino, salt and pepper to a large bowl and blend. Mix in the turkey. Shape the turkey mixture into 1 1/4-inch-diameter meatballs. Place on a large plate or baking sheet.

Heat the oil in a heavy large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the meatballs and sauté until browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. Turn off heat. Transfer the meatballs to a plate. Pour off any excess oil.

Add the marinara sauce, about 3 cups. Return all the meatballs to the pan. Turn the heat to medium-low and simmer until the sauce thickens slightly and the flavors blend, 15 to 20 minutes. Season the sauce, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Transfer the meatball mixture to a serving bowl. Serve with toothpicks.

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Simple Tomato Sauce:

In a large casserole pot, heat oil over medium high heat. Add onion and garlic and saute until soft and translucent, about 2 minutes. Add celery and carrots and season with salt and pepper. Saute until all the vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, basil, and bay leaves and simmer covered on low heat for 1 hour or until thick. Remove bay leaves and check for seasoning. If sauce still tastes acidic, add unsalted butter, 1 tablespoon at a time to round out the flavors.

Add half the tomato sauce into the bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth. Continue with remaining tomato sauce.

If not using all the sauce, allow it to cool completely and pour 1 to 2 cup portions into freezer plastic bags. This will freeze up to 6 months.