

Italian Chicken Meatballs with Marinara Sauce



In my book, spaghetti and meatballs is the ultimate comfort food. I love just about any meatball recipe, but I have to say, I am all about homemade meatballs. I prefer the texture and knowing what ingredients are in them. I wanted to try a lighter/ healthier chicken meatball so I added plenty of cheese, tomatoes and fresh herbs to give them a lot of flavor. They not only turn out moist and delicious, but how can you beat a hearty spaghetti and meatball supper for 267 calories? For the marinara sauce, my trick is carrots. The sweetness of the carrots balances the acidity of the tomatoes without having to add sugar, as many sauce recipes do. This recipe freezes very well and also makes for yummy meatball subs or sliders!

Ingredients~

Meatballs~

- 1 pound ground chicken breast
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs (whole wheat)
- 1/2 cup grated Asiago cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped sundried tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Olive oil cooking spray

Marinara sauce~

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium finely chopped onion
- 3 cloves chopped garlic
- 1/2 cup finely diced carrot
- 2 (26.8 ounce) cartons "Pomi" brand strained tomatoes
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley



Directions~

- 1.) Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
- 2.) For the meatballs, thoroughly mix together chicken, egg, breadcrumbs, Asiago cheese, sundried tomatoes, parsley, basil, salt and pepper. Form into 1-1/2 inch balls by rolling in the palms of your hands (you will have approximately 20 meatballs). Prepare a baking sheet with olive oil spray. Bake meatballs for 20 minutes. Remove meatballs and set aside.
- 3.) Heat olive oil in a large sauce pan; add onion, garlic and carrot. Cook until onions and carrots are softened, about 4-5 minutes. Add tomatoes, basil, and parsley; bring to simmer. Cook for 10 minutes. Add meatballs, stirring to coat evenly in sauce; cover and cook over low heat until meatballs are warm and sauce is slightly thickened, about 10-15 minutes.
- 4.) Serve over cooked pasta. (2 ounce serving per person). I prefer a whole grain pasta (such as Barilla Plus) or a pasta with a lower glycemic index (such as Dreamfields).

Serves 6~ at 267 calories per serving