



Humongous Meatballs with Italian Plum Tomato Sauce
Sunday super sauce with 4 Italian Meatballs

Italian Plum Tomato Sauce:

3 to 4 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/-1/2 teaspoons sea salt
4 large garlic cloves, peeled, minced
1 (28 oz.) can crushed plum tomatoes
1 (16 oz.) can crushed plum tomatoes
1/4 teaspoon granulated sugar (if tomatoes are tart)

- In a large pot or Dutch oven, add oil, pepper, salt, and garlic. Cook on medium until just turning lightly golden brown.
- Slowly add both cans of tomatoes; bring to a boil; lower heat to medium-low, continue cooking for about 20 minutes; stirring about every 5 minutes to make sure tomatoes do not stick to the bottom of the pot. Remove from heat. Taste for additional salt or pepper. If tomatoes are tart, add sugar; set aside.

Humongous Meatballs

1-1/2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/3 cup minced onion
3 cloves minced garlic
1/2-pound ground beef (80/20)
1/2-pound blended ground Wagyu beef
1/2 cup whole milk ricotta cheese
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup Panko breadcrumbs
1 whole egg
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Searing and Serving:

2 Tablespoons olive oil for searing
2 to 3 cups fresh basil leaves
4 to 8 Tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese
Serve with: Italian Round Bread Loaf, sliced thin

- Place oil in large skillet, add onion and garlic; sauté for 2 to 3 minutes to soften. Set aside to cool.
- In a large bowl, place ground beef, blended Wagyu beef, ricotta cheese, Parmesan cheese, breadcrumbs, egg, salt, black pepper, and warm onion/garlic mixture. Mix thoroughly until they are completely combined and uniformly firm.
- Divide meat in quarters; form into 4 meatballs. If meat is sticky, coat hands with olive oil.

Sear the Meatballs:

- Using medium heat, place 2 Tablespoons olive oil in pan, heat pan to 300 degrees F.
- Cook, searing meatballs for about 8 minutes; rotating each side of the meatball for about 1 minute per side. (Hint) use the edge of the pan to stabilize and easily turn the meatballs. The meatballs will hold their form better)

Simmering the Meatballs:

- Place the seared meatballs in the hot tomato sauce. Place the fresh basil on top of the meatballs.
- Bring mixture to a boil; reduce to low heat; cover pan. Cook for 10 minutes; stir; then turn meatballs over; cook for another 10 minutes.
- Baste the meatballs with the sauce as they simmer and reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees F. Remove from heat; let rest for 5 minutes. Top each meatball with 1 to 2 Tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese.
- Serve with toasted bread slices. Yield: Serves 4

Recipe Inspired by: Chef Fabio's Grandma's recipe served at Siena Tavern in Chicago

Cook's Note: The secret for making great meatballs is to simmer seared firm meatballs in a fresh basil Italian sauce. When we had a meatball appetizer at Siena Tavern, we found ourselves scooping up the cheese-topped, tender meatball and scraping up all the flavorful sauce with extra pieces of Italian bread. I knew that we would try making one at home. Now we can enjoy them right in our own kitchen.

About the Recipe: Our meatballs combine ground beef with Wagyu blended beef, which provides a juicy textured meatball. Simple Italian ingredients add that ethnic old-fashioned flavor, and searing the meatballs makes them firm enough to simmer in the rich fresh basil sauce. They can be used for a delicious Italian dinner or appetizers.