

Spaghetti & Meatballs

Serves 4 to 6:

Ingredients

Meatballs:

1/2 baguette or small bread, crust removed
1/4 cup milk
1 1/2 pounds ground pork, beef & veal (1/2 pound each)
2 tablespoons minced parsley
2 tablespoons minced basil
2 garlic cloves, pressed
2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg, beaten
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Tomato Sauce:

2 tablespoons olive oil
3 smashed garlic cloves
2-28 ounce cans whole peeled tomatoes
pinch red pepper flakes
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 teaspoons sugar
1 pound spaghetti

minced basil for garnish
freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Remove the inside pulp of a half baguette or small bread and tear into pieces.

Place in bowl, add milk and set aside to allow bread to absorb the liquid.

In a large bowl, combine ground meat with minced parsley and basil, garlic, Parmesan cheese and egg. Add soaked bread and thoroughly combine all ingredients gently, being careful not to overwork the meat. Generously season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Moisten your hands and roll meatballs into the size of golf balls.
Lay them out on silicone mat or parchment paper lined baking sheets.
Place in the oven and bake for 20 minutes, rotating the pans midway.

Make sauce: in a large sauté pan, heat olive oil over medium heat.
Add several smashed garlic cloves and let them cook for about a minute, flavoring the oil.
Pulse canned peeled whole tomatoes in a blender (one can at a time) for 30 seconds until pureed.
Slowly add to the hot pan.
Season the sauce with red pepper flakes, kosher salt, black pepper, dried thyme and oregano.
Crush the dried herbs in the palm of your hand to release their essential oils as you add them to the pan.
Add sugar to balance the acid of the tomatoes.
Bring sauce to a simmer and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
Taste and adjust seasoning.

When the meatballs have finished baking, add them to the sauce.
Simmer for an additional 10 to 15 minutes until heated through.

Cook the spaghetti until al dente.
Plate the pasta and top generously with meatballs and sauce.
Garnish with minced basil and a flurry of freshly grated Parmesan cheese before serving.

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