

Marie's Meatball Recipe

BY MARIE ARMENIA

EVENTUALLY, they ask for it, and I give it with all my heart. My meatball recipe, that is. I've lived here in the South almost 25 years, but the recipe is something not everyone down here grew up with. Usually, the people who make it are surprised at how easy it is. Go figure. It's just meat, you know. Regular chopped meat. You add some eggs and breadcrumbs, you mix in the right amount of spices, and then you fry them and put them in the sauce. You have to follow the directions, but it's not difficult. Everyone who's tried to make them loves them.

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds ground beef (round)
4 eggs
1½ cups Italian style breadcrumbs
¾ cup whole milk
2 tablespoons dry basil
1½ teaspoons salt
2 cups grated Romano cheese, divided
3 cups olive oil for frying (see note for accurate amount)
72-ounce jar spaghetti sauce (or use homemade)
Spaghetti noodles (your choice)



DIRECTIONS

1. Combine beef, eggs, breadcrumbs, milk, basil, salt, and 1 cup Romano cheese in a large bowl. Mix all ingredients together by hand until well mixed.
2. Using your hands, form a meatball that is about 3 inches in diameter. (You can make them smaller if you prefer.)
3. In a shallow frying pan, pour in olive oil and heat to high temp. (Please note: The oil should be at least ½-inch deep.) When oil is heated, lower the temperature a little, but not too much.
4. Place meatballs in HEATED olive oil, being certain the meatballs fry and sizzle immediately.
5. Cook meatballs until crust forms on one side — about 5 minutes. Turn meatballs and fry on the other side for 5 minutes. If you see a portion that is not cooked, continue frying meatball until you see a hard exterior. Meatballs must have a hard exterior so they will be able to stay together while in the sauce. The meatballs will not be fully cooked on the inside.
6. Place the spaghetti sauce on the stove and turn on the heat. Add meatballs to the sauce and let them cook for at least 2 hours while you monitor them. This should cook at a moderate sizzle, where the meatballs are cooking but the sauce is not burning.
7. Let the sauce and meatballs simmer together. When the olive oil starts to show on top, the sauce is done. Skim off this oil.
8. Prepare pasta of your choice according to package directions.
9. When pasta is ready, place it in a dish. Spoon sauce and meatballs over prepared pasta.
10. Sprinkle remaining Romano cheese on top.