



Meatballs!!!

Inspired by Tratorria Dario, Vero Beach, FL and dawnviola via Food52

Ingredients:

Breadcrumbs:

- 1 small loaf of fresh, white bread
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 head of garlic
- 1-2 shallots
- 1 bunch of fresh basil
- 1/4 cup of oregano
- 3 Tbs fresh thyme leaves stripped of their stems
- 1 Tbs fresh tarragon
- 1/4 cup curly parsley
- 1/4 cup flat leaf parsley
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 1/8 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp white pepper

Meatballs:

- 1 lbs ground beef or bison
- 1/2 tsp anchovy paste or the meat from 3 small anchovies
- 1 egg, beaten
- breadcrumbs from above
- 2-3 Tbs olive oil for cooking

- 1 wedge of aged parmesan cheese
(This is not for garnish, it is necessary!)
- 4 small basil leaves
(Okay, these are for garnish, but they're so nice!.)

Instructions:

Make the Breadcrumbs

1. Tear the bread into small-ish chunks into the large bowl of a food processor and process into large crumbs. Set aside.
2. Chop or mince the shallots, then heat the olive oil in a large saute pan over medium heat. Then peel and smash and very roughly chop the garlic cloves.
3. Saute the shallots and garlic until they become just roasted and lightly golden, a couple minutes.
4. Add all the herbs up to the parsley, and saute for a minute or two more.
5. Add the bread crumbs to the pan and saute several minutes until the bread has absorbed the herbs and oil and toasts to a nice golden brown on most of the crumbs.

6. Add the garlic powder, onion powder, salt and peppers, and toss and toast a few minutes more.
7. When toasted, remove from the heat and allow to cool for about 10 minutes.
8. When cool, add the now-seasoned, toasted bread crumbs as well as the fresh parsley to the food processor and process for about a minute, then set aside one more time. (It's almost their time!)
9. Grind the meat in a meat grinder with the finest grinding plate you have.
10. Place your velvety ground beef or bison in a large bowl and smash in the anchovy paste and beaten egg and mix together with your hands.
11. Then add the breadcrumbs. They should be cool enough to also mix in with your bare hands.
12. Shape the meatballs. Trattoria Dario-style, I like to make them about 2 Tbs of meat each ball. I usually get about 6-8 meatballs. Place on a large dinner plate next to your large saute pan.
13. (The Food 52 recipe by dawnviola says to place the shaped meatballs in the fridge for 20 minutes to allow them to firm up. I must confess, it's a nice step, but I do not always do this, and the meatballs still crisp nicely in patches on the outside and taste creamy, herby and just wonderful.
14. Heat the 2-3 Tbs of olive oil in the bread crumb saute pan over medium high heat and allow to heat for several minutes.
15. Place the meatballs in the heated pan with some gentle tongs, being sure not to overcrowd them.
16. Leave each ball on it's side for a couple minutes before turning. And turn each one in turn allowing each side it's couple minutes in the heat.
17. Once all sides are browned nicely, and are looking photogenic, remove from the pan and place to simmer in the spaghetti sauce pot.

Assuming you are making spaghetti and meatballs, and not just eating meatballs on a plate with a couple slices of fresh mozzarella on the side, then follow on.

18. While your meatballs are simmering in your spaghetti sauce, heat 2 1/2 quarts of generously salted water with a dollop of olive oil on top, and bring to a boil.
19. Boil your spaghetti for about 10-11 minutes, or by package instructions.
20. Drain your pasta and quickly rinse and re-drain.
21. Hopefully, your obligatory salad is already on the table, and your significant other has already poured a glass of Cabernet, and you've made the caprese salad earlier, because it's time to plate up!
22. With your slotted, pasta-gripping spoon, dish an adequate portion of the pasta squarely in the middle of a deep dinner plate, and ladle out two meatballs, and then ladle out that sauce.
23. Complete the meal with freshly grated parmesan cheese and garnish with a basil leaf or two.
24. Mangia!