

SAMIN NOSRAT'S FLUFFY PORK MEATBALLS



Makes 16-18 meatballs

Ingredients

- 120g panko breadcrumbs
- 180ml full-fat milk
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for cooking
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 450g pork shoulder mince
- 1 medium egg
- 45g finely grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
- 20g minced parsley
- 1 1/2 tsp fennel seeds, lightly crushed
- 1 1/2 tsp chilli flakes
- 1 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp (6g) kosher salt
- 1kg Simple Tomato Sauce (page 359)
- 240 to 360ml water

To serve

Olive Oil-Fried Bread (page 94), rubbed with garlic, for serving

“While I’ve always been a fan of the old camp song ‘On Top of Spaghetti’, I firmly believe that’s the very last place a meatball belongs. No matter how many meatballs I’m served, the pasta-to-meatball ratio is never right, and I always end up with half a bowl of lonely spaghetti! No, I prefer to serve these tender meatballs atop a slice of olive oil-fried bread rubbed with garlic, with ample sauce spooned over both. And covered with lots and lots of cheese (grated Parmesan, naturally) — because that part of the song was spot on.”

Method

1. In a medium bowl, combine the panko and milk. Use your hands to massage the liquid into the crumbs, but do not overwork. Set aside to soak until completely absorbed.
2. Set a frying pan over low heat and add the olive oil. When the oil shimmers, add the onion and gently cook, stirring regularly, until soft but without colour, 10 to 12 minutes.
3. Add the garlic and cook until aromatic, but don’t let it take on any colour, about 30 seconds. Scrape everything into a large bowl and allow it to cool.
4. Once the onion has cooled, add the pork, egg, Parmesan, parsley, fennel seeds, chilli flakes, black pepper, and salt. Use your hands to combine the mixture well. Add the panko and milk to the pork mixture and gently mix to combine. Avoid overworking or overcompressing the mixture, which can result in gummy or dense meatballs.
5. Make a small test patty to test the seasoning. Set a small frying pan over medium heat and add 1 tablespoon oil. Add the patty and cook until nicely browned on both sides and cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt, fennel, and chilli flakes as needed. Repeat with another test patty until the mixture is just right. Cover and refrigerate the mixture for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
6. Coat a baking tray with oil. Use wet hands to gently form the mixture into 16 to 18 meatballs, about 60g each, avoiding the urge to overcompress! Place the meatballs on the baking tray, making sure to leave space between them for browning to occur. Chill the formed meatballs for 30 minutes to 1 hour to help them keep their shape.

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7. Preheat the grill.

8. In a large casserole, combine the tomato sauce and 240ml water and bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low.

9. Meanwhile, set the baking tray in the oven so that the meatballs are 5 to 10cm from the heat source and grill until browned on top, about 8 minutes. (Browning times will vary considerably depending on grill strength, so keep a close eye on your meatballs the first time you brown them.)

10. Remove the meatballs from the oven and transfer them to the simmering sauce. If needed, add another 120ml water to ensure all the meatballs are partially submerged. Simmer, stirring gently as needed, until the meatballs are cooked through, 6 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat, cover, and leave the meatballs in the warm sauce until ready to serve.

11. Serve with olive oil-fried bread lightly swiped with a garlic clove, and abundant grated Parmesan.

12. Cool, cover, and store leftovers in remaining sauce. Refrigerate for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 3 months. Bring to a boil before using.

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GOOD THINGS SAMIN NOSRAT

author of *Salt Fat Acid Heat*

A recipe from *Good Things: Recipes to Share with People You Love* by Samin Nosrat, Ebury.