



Meatballs and Pasta

Meatballs are fantastic! They're perfect like this, with a one-minute homemade tomato sauce and spaghetti, but you could also try them with rice, mashed potatoes, polenta or simple chunks of fresh crusty bread. I like to make meatballs with a mixture of beef and pork, as I think it gives a really wonderful flavor and texture.

Serves 4-6

- 4 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 12 saltine crackers
- 2 heaped teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 pound good-quality ground beef, pork, or a mixture of the two
- 1 heaped tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 large egg, preferably free-range or organic
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- olive oil
- a bunch of fresh basil
- 1 medium onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- ½ a fresh or dried red chile
- 2 x 14-ounce cans of diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 pound dried spaghetti or penne
- Parmesan cheese, for grating

To make your meatballs:

Pick the rosemary leaves off the woody stalks and finely chop them • Wrap the crackers in a tea towel and smash up until fine, breaking up any big bits up with your hands • Add to the bowl with the mustard, ground meat, chopped rosemary and oregano • Crack in the egg and add a good pinch of salt and pepper • With clean hands scrunch and mix up well • Divide into 4 large balls • With wet hands, divide each ball into 6 and roll into little meatballs – you should end up with 24 • Drizzle them with olive oil and jiggle them about so they all get coated • Put them on a plate, cover and place in the fridge until needed

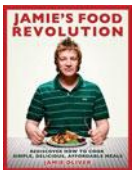


To cook your pasta, meatballs and sauce:

Pick the basil leaves, keeping any smaller ones to one side for later • Peel and finely chop the onion and the garlic • Finely slice the chile • Put a large pan of salted water on to boil • Next, heat a large frying pan on a medium heat and add 2 lugs of olive oil • Add your onion to the frying pan and stir for around 7 minutes or until softened and lightly golden • Then add your garlic and chile, and as soon as they start to get some color add the large basil leaves • Add the tomatoes and the balsamic vinegar • Bring to the boil and season to taste • Meanwhile, heat another large frying pan and add a lug of olive oil and your meatballs • Stir them around and cook for 8–10 minutes until golden (check they're cooked by opening one up – there should be no sign of pink) • Add the meatballs to the sauce and simmer until the pasta is ready, then remove from the heat • Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to the packet instructions

To serve your meatballs:

Saving some of the cooking water, drain the pasta in a colander • Return the pasta to the pan • Spoon half the tomato sauce into the pasta, adding a little splash of your reserved water to loosen • Serve on a large platter, or in separate bowls, with the rest of the sauce and meatballs on top • Sprinkle over the small basil leaves and some grated Parmesan



This recipe is taken from Jamie's Food Revolution by Jamie Oliver (Hyperion). © Jamie Oliver, 2009