

Herbed Meatballs

Prep: 15 minutes/ **Cooking:** 15 to 20 minutes/**Yield:** 24 meatballs; 6 servings

You don't need to sauté or stir meatballs while they cook, nor do you need pasta to make the meal. You can serve them over spaghetti squash with red sauce, or with roasted vegetables and a side salad, cooked leafy greens, or blanched or parboiled vegetables with a dip or dressing.

Notes: Transfer frozen meat to the refrigerator 24 to 48 hours before cooking. If you don't tolerate gluten, bind the meatballs with dried shan yao (Radix Dioscorea), a starchy white tuber sold sliced and dried in boxes in Chinese markets and herb shops. Powder it in a blender or spice-dedicated coffee-grinder, then add it to meat mixture below. Or try the flax seed binder listed below.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup thick or old fashioned rolled oats (aka oatmeal or see variations)*
1/4 cup nut milk, water, **or** broth
1 medium to large egg
1 1/2 teaspoons dried herbs **or** 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons minced:
Italian blend, Herbes de Provence, or combination of 2-3 herbs: sage, thyme, marjoram, oregano, basil, thyme
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon *ground* chipotle **or** black pepper
1 clove of garlic, minced or pressed
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley **or** 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
1/2 to 1 teaspoon finely ground, unrefined sea salt **or** 1 to 2 tablespoons tamari soy sauce
1/2 cup minced onion **or** 1 tablespoon freeze dried onion or shallot flakes
1 to 1 1/4 pounds lean ground beef, bison, **or** lamb
1/2 cup water, use only if simmering meatballs

1. In a medium bowl, combine oats (or shan yao) and milk. If possible, soak for 1 to 8 hours in the refrigerator. Add eggs, herbs, cumin, red/black pepper, garlic, parsley, salt or tamari, and onion.
2. Crumble meat into a large bowl and add the mixture from step #1 above. Mix with clean bare hands pulling apart rather than squeezing and packing to evenly distribute seasoning (I use disposable gloves). Do not over mix. Shape into 24 (1-inch) balls.
3. **To simmer:** Bring 1/2 cup water to boil in a 12-inch skillet. Add meatballs; cover, reduce heat, and simmer 15 to 20 minutes, until the same color throughout. Remove lid and cook away liquid.
To bake: Omit 1/2 cup liquid. Bake meatballs on parchment-lined baking sheet in a preheated 350° F-oven for 15 to 20 minutes, shaking pan occasionally, until done.
4. Serve, then freeze any leftovers you don't plan to use within 3 days.

1 serving (beef): 140 calories, 19 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate (1 g fiber), 5 g fat, 26 mg

calcium, 202 mg sodium

Variations:

- * **Gluten-free meatballs** Replace rolled oats with 1/4 cup powdered, dried Shan Yao (described above). If you don't have oats or shan yao, you can simply omit it.
- * **Egg-free meatballs:** Replace eggs with 1 1/2 teaspoons Energy Foods Egg Replacer dissolved in 1 tablespoon warm water, then whisked well after 5 minutes.
- * Replace herbs in the master recipe with 1 teaspoons ground coriander, increase cumin to 1 teaspoon, and add 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice with 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Add garlic if desired, and proceed as above.

Better Barbecue Sauce

Prep: 20 minutes/ **Cooking:** 20 to 30 minutes/**Yield:** 2 1/3 cups; 9 servings

This mild, slightly smoky sauce contains less sugar, less sodium, fewer calories than conventional barbecue sauce. Use it liberally at the table the way you'd use ketchup or tomato sauce, over meatballs, meatloaf, burgers, steak, roasts, chicken, turkey, pork, even salmon. **Note:** Make a double batch for convenience; this recipe freezes well. **Note:** Calcium content will be higher and flavor richer if using Bone-Building Broth.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil **or** unrefined coconut oil
1 cup minced fresh onion
1 teaspoon unrefined sea salt **or** 2 tablespoons tamari soy sauce (reduce by one-half or more if using salted broth below)
3 cloves minced garlic **or** 1 teaspoon garlic powder (about 1 teaspoon)
1 teaspoon ground cumin (preferably ground fresh)
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/3 teaspoon ground chipotle (smoked dried jalapeno pepper powder)
1 teaspoon dried, crumbled basil
1 teaspoon dried, crumbled oregano, optional
1 (6-ounce) can salt-free, sugar-free tomato paste
1 1/4 cups water **or** homemade chicken or vegetable broth or stock (From *The Garden of Eating*) or preservative-free chicken or vegetable broth, such as Imagine Foods/
Pacific
2 tablespoons raw apple cider vinegar **or** 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1/4 teaspoon pure stevia extract powder
1 tablespoon honey, agavé nectar **or** sorghum syrup

1. Heat oil and onions in a 1-quart saucepan over medium heat. Stir until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. After adding liquid, whisk until smooth.
2. Bring to a low boil, cover, reduce heat, and simmer with the lid ajar or cover with a spatter screen, and stir periodically, until thick, 20 to 30 minutes.
3. Pour sauce into 1 or more wide-mouth glass jars. Cover when cool, and refrigerate. Once jar feels cold to the touch, freeze what you don't plan to use within 2 weeks.

1/4 cup: 45 calories, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate (1 g fiber), 2 g fat, 12 mg calcium, 119 mg sodium

SOURCE: *The Garden of Eating: A Produce-Dominated Diet & Cookbook* By Rachel Albert-Matesz & Don Matesz (Planetary Press, 2004)