

Baseball Meatballs over Spaghetti and San Marzano Sausage Pomodoro Sauce



By Chef Marti Mongiello – serves six (8)

FOR THE RED SAUCE (we call it gravy)

- ¼ cups olive oil
- 2 lb Ingles brand, homemade Italian sausage
- 1 can Cento tomato paste
- ¼ large onion, diced
- 10 cloves of crushed garlic
- 2 (35 oz.) cans of Cento San Marzano Pomodoro San Marzano peeled tomatoes
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tablespoons dry garlic powder
- 1 Tablespoon pepper
- ½ cup Italian seasoning
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 1 cup of loose, fresh basil, (not packed tight) – then chop

PASTA

- 10 cups water, 1 Teaspoon Kosher salt, 1 LB spaghetti per 4 people, 2 Tablespoons olive oil

MEATBALLS

- 1 large onion diced, 4 Tablespoons water, 2 Tablespoons pepper, 1 Tablespoon salt, 1 cup Italian seasoning
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, 2 cups packed, leftover stuffing, 1 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 3 eggs, 4 cloves crushed garlic, 6 LBS 93% lean ground beef

FOR THE RED SAUCE: In a large heavy bottom skillet add olive oil and have it over low heat. Add the can of tomato paste to the oil and stir paste. Add the cloves of crushed garlic, stir and cook for 2 hours slowly and on low. Put lid on sauce. **Note:** make sure sauce is simmering not boiling. Add the Italian sausage; chop up sausage with spoon - into bite-sized pieces. **Note:** Be careful with spoon that has raw pork on it, don't mix with anything else. In sauce add large onion diced stirring and chopping occasionally to make sure sauce is fully cooking. Take sausage with skillet and dump into larger pot. Be sure to scrap off bottom with metal spoon. Add the 2 cans of peeled tomatoes (hand crush them) and the grated Parmesan cheese.

PASTA: In another pot add water and kosher salt, bring to a boil. Once boiling add spaghetti and the olive oil to keep the pasta from sticking. Throw a piece of pasta to the wall if it sticks its done. Drain pasta then toss liberally with 1 tsp olive oil to keep from sticking.

TO MAKE THE MEATBALLS: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large glass bowl add the diced onion, water and microwave for 3 minutes. Check for softness and translucent onions. **Note:** depending on your microwave - cook longer. Some are not as powerful. The onions should be tender.

In large bowl add the pepper, salt, and Italian seasoning. Stir salt, pepper, and Italian seasoning. Add the finished onions, stir mixture. Add grated Parmesan cheese, continue to toss mixture then add the leftover stuffing, and continue to stir mixture using the dry cheese and herbs to soak up moisture. Add the Italian seasoned bread crumbs. Crack the eggs in a separate bowl, liberally whisk the eggs until they are scrambled and fluffy. Add the eggs to the mixture, mix scrambled eggs well with stuffing mixture. Then add crushed garlic cloves, stir. Add the ground beef to mixture and begin to form baseball sized meatballs or make into a meatloaf. **Warning:** Be cautious not to cream and smear the ground beef when mixing. We are not stirring, or beating, gently as you can - fold the mixture. For meatloaf, spray a meatloaf pan with olive oil. For baseball meatballs, shape up huge balls and put onto a thick baking sheet pan. Bake for an hour, to an hour and 15 minutes depending on how brown you enjoy them. Test with a proper thermometer.

In the large pot, add the dry garlic powder, pepper, Italian seasoning, and salt. **Note:** Dried garlic powder has a more intense flavor that's why I am using it in this recipe.

Take the 2 empty metal cans and swish a quarter can of warm water back and forth cleaning out the cans, getting all the sauce out of the cans and add the water to the mixture. This is an important Italian tradition. It shows thrifty behavior concerned with expenses and waste. Return pot with sauce to simmer for 3 more hours. At the end of the sauce add the fresh basil. You can add more or less of the fresh basil depending on how you like it. Then serve over pasta when done. Put pasta in bowl serve with sauce over top, and then add a generous amount of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese.

