Mouthwatering Meatballs

Doused with a healthy portion of red sauce, stuffed between crunchy bread, or served bobbing in a piping hot soup, meatballs are prepared and served in nearly limitless ways.

Meatballs are commonly served in marinara sauce. They are made with a mixture of beef and another ground protein. Many people use pork, sausage, veal, or all three. Pork gives meatballs extra flavor, and veal keeps them tender and moist. All-beef meatballs are also another great option. When making all-beef meatballs, it is important to choose an 80/20 blend so the meatballs have enough fat to keep them from drying out. When adding other types of meat, try using a 90/10 ratio.

When making meatballs, there are a few mistakes you can make. The meatballs may be lacking in flavor, tough, chewy, or rubbery. Follow the tips below to create the perfect meatball every time.

1. Seasoning the meat

If you forget to season the meat or do not add enough seasoning when blending the mixture, expect the meatballs to fall flat on flavor.

If you are unsure of the amount of seasoning to add, try adding what you think is best, then cook up a test meatball. This will allow you to add seasoning to your taste before cooking up the entire batch. I strongly recommend this step so you can adjust the seasonings as needed.

2. Add enough moisture

When making meatballs, it is essential to add some moisture. Without moisture, the protein in the meatballs forces them to shrink as they cook and produces a tough meatball. Whether that moisture is eggs or a binder made from milk and bread crumbs is your choice.

3. Avoid overmixing

When preparing a meatball mixture, something about it makes us feel like it needs to be thoroughly mixed. The amount the meat is mixed has a direct impact on the texture of the meatball. We miss out on a very tender meatball when the meat is overworked.

4. Correctly shape

When making meatballs, you should not be squishing them into super-tight, compact rounds. If the meatballs are packed together too tightly, they will cook up rubbery, chewy, and tough.

5. Uniform meatballs

If the meatballs are different sizes, they will cook unevenly. The smaller meatballs may end up dry and overcooked, while the larger ones may end up undercooked.

Many make meatballs by grabbing small amounts of meat mixture and then rolling it into a ball. When doing this, the meatballs may be different sizes, so try these two methods to get more uniform meatballs.

Use a small ice cream scoop to make perfectly round meatballs of the same size. After scooping, smooth them out into round meatballs by gently rolling them in your hands.

Take the meatball mixture and pat it out into a big rectangle about 1/2 inch thick. Then take a knife and cut through the meat horizontally and vertically to form little squares.

When looking at meatball recipes, you may find many different ways to cook them. Each cooking method creates a meatball with different textures and flavors, so knowing the differences can help you decide which to use for your recipe.

Pan-searing

Pan-searing is perfect for you if you like meatballs with a slight crunch. The hot pan will cook the meatballs while also adding a thin crust on the outside. Add a splash of red wine to the pan when the meatballs are fully cooked. This will help deglaze the pan and add all the tasty bits into the sauce.

Baking

Baking may be the way to go when you make many meatballs at once because it is quicker and easier than pan-searing. Baking will allow the meatballs to evenly cook while having golden brown surfaces.

Boiling

Another cooking technique you can try is to boil the meatballs. This is the best method for keeping the meat tender if that is what you are after, but many chefs find that they fall apart when cooked this way.

Meatballs should be tender and juicy, with irresistible flavors that make you crave more. Pair meatballs with a bed of pasta or in a scrumptious sandwich to make up for the ultimate comfort meal to brighten your day.

(Sources: frugulupstate.com; learntocook.com; seriouseats.com; southernliving.com)