

Spaghetti and Meatballs

INGREDIENTS

Tomato Sauce

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, minced
- 3 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 carrot, peeled and minced
- 1 bell pepper (any color), seeded, and diced
- 1 T. dried Italian herb blend
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 cans (28 oz) whole tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can (6 oz) tomato paste
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 2 tsp sugar
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Meatballs

- 2 lbs lean ground beef
- 1 lb lean ground pork
- 4 oz prosciutto, finely minced
- 1 med onion, finely minced
- 3 large cloves of garlic, finely minced
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley
- 1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
- 1 T dried oregano
- 1/2 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
- 3/4 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 8 oz mozzarella cheese cut into 1/2" cubes
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 lbs spaghetti (or spaghetti squash)

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the tomato sauce: heat the olive oil in a large heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic, carrot and bell pepper and sauté 10 mins. Stir in the herbs and fennel seed. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, wine, sugar, salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer, cover and continue to simmer 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

While the sauce is simmering, prepare the meatballs: combine the beef, pork, and prosciutto in a large mixing bowl. With your hands or a large wooden spoon, mix in all the remaining ingredients through the eggs. Season with salt and pepper.

Grease a baking sheet or line with parchment paper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

To form each meatball, take a generous scoop of the meat mixture, flatten it into a patty, place a cube of mozzarella in the center, then roll into a ball about 3" in diameter. Place the meatballs 1/2" apart on the prepared baking sheet. (This mixture should make about 24 meatballs.) Brush each meatball lightly all over with olive oil. Bake until cooked through and lightly browned, about 40 mins. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the meatballs to tomato sauce. Simmer uncovered 30 mins longer.

I bake the "pricked" spaghetti squash whole in the microwave 7-8 mins and then roll it over for another 7 mins.