



JOE'S "NOT SO WORLD FAMOUS MEATBALL RECIPE"

Just a short note before I get started. It took me a number of years to perfect this recipe so if you don't get it right the first few times, keep trying and remember what you did each time so that you can add or subtract whatever needs to be done. Read through the entire recipe before starting so that you have everything ready.

This recipe is based on using 1 lb. of chopped meat (which would be enough for about 6 people). Naturally if you use more meat you must increase the amount of ingredients but not necessarily double the ingredients. It becomes a matter of taste. You may choose to use several kinds of meat and mix them together, ex. pork, veal and beef. I usually use just beef and try to find the leanest. I have not found a significant difference in the taste using the different kinds of meat. I like to use fresh ingredients whenever I can but sometimes you have to improvise. So whatever works for you, go for it. Just don't tell anyone the ingredients weren't fresh.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. Chopped meat
- A sprinkle of salt to taste
- A sprinkle of pepper to taste
- 1 cup of grated cheese (Parmesan, Romano or Locatelli). I prefer using Reggiano Parmigiano. It is more expensive but well worth it. You can also use it to sprinkle on your pasta or cut pieces to serve as an appetizer. For me this is the king of cheeses.
- ½ tsp. Oregano or Italian seasoning
- 2 tbsps. Onion powder
- 3 tbsps. Granulated garlic powder
- 5 tbsps. Parsley flakes
- 1 cup of flavored bread crumbs
- 1 egg per lb. Of meat
- Water as needed

Note: I usually use just a little bit more of cheese, onion powder, garlic powder and parsley flakes than you see in the above recipe because I like my meatballs to have an intense flavor, but it becomes a matter of taste.

- Combine all the ingredients in a mixing bowl large enough to hold all the Ingredients without overflowing. Don't forget that you will be adding water to the mixture so allow room to move the mixture around.
- Add 1 cup of water when you first start to mix and then add more water as you go along to get to the right texture and consistency.
- When you first start to mix, squeeze the mixture through your fingers and try to get all the ingredients to mix with each other. As you mix feel for the texture and add water as needed being careful not to over water. Just add a little water at a time.
- I find that the mixing technique is important because you want the mixture to be uniform in color, texture and consistency.

- After squeezing the mixture for a short time and getting all the ingredients mixed together, you will now mix in a different way. With one hand hold the bowl and the other you will be folding the mixture like bread dough.
- As you turn the mixture over into itself, let the mixture squeeze through your fingers. After you do this turn the bowl a little and continue to mix, always turning the bowl. This insures that you will be mixing all the ingredients uniformly. If the mix looks like it's uniform take the whole mixture and turn it upside down in the bowl and mix another 6 turns of the bowl, this will complete the mixing process.
- When finished mixing, the mixture should be uniform in color. The texture and consistency should be firm yet moist. The way to check is to roll a meatball in your hand and put it on a dish and see if it stands by itself without sagging and not feeling mushy.
- Before rolling the meatballs, have a bowl of water near where you are going to roll the meatballs or let the water just trickle from the faucet, to keep your hands wet. Wet your hands every other meatball. This will prevent the meat from sticking to your hands and it gives the meatball a nice smooth finish. Sometimes the meat sticks to your hands and you may have to wash them to make sure that you are getting the smooth finish that you need.
- When rolling the meatballs, check to see that there are no "cracks" in the meatballs. Wherever you see a "crack", just pinch it and roll until you have a smooth finish. If you leave a "crack" in the meatball, it may fall apart while cooking or later when you add it to your
- gravy.
- Roll out about 12 to 15 meatballs and put them on a dish. I make mine about the size of a ping pong ball. Before you roll out the meatballs, follow the steps below for heating the oil. This way the oil will be heating while you are rolling the meatballs. Have

another dish by the stove with a paper towel on it and place the cooked meatballs on the dish with the paper towel to absorb the oil.

- I use a 12 inch cast iron frying pan when cooking only 1 or 2 lbs. Of meat. I use a larger one when cooking more. (a good frying pan is recommended because it will conduct the heat more uniformly and you will have less of a problem with the meatballs sticking. It does not have to be cast iron). The reason is that you will not be able to cook all the meatballs at one time, so you have to make some, take them out of the pan and make some more in the same oil. So as you cook, the oil will start to overcook and burn the meatballs. No matter what size frying pan you use, you will not be able to get more than 2 batches of meatballs from the oil without changing it.
- Do not use olive oil to cook the meatballs. I find that peanut oil holds up the best under the high heat but you can use a canola or vegetable oil if you wish.
- Heat your frying pan for 1 minute on low heat before putting in about ½ inch of oil into the frying pan. Raise the heat to between med-high. It is important to have the oil at the right temperature. This insures that the meatballs will not stick to the frying pan and that they will brown nicely on the outside and be moist on the inside. Everyone's stove is different so this will take some
- experimenting. My stove is gas and i set it to high and it's the perfect temperature for cooking the meatballs. Test the oil by 1 of 2 ways.
- First by sprinkling a couple of drops of water into the oil, if the oil jumps, spits and crackles back at you fiercely, it is ready.
- Second put the bottom part of a wooden spoon into the oil in the center of the frying pan. If you see little bubbles forming around the bottom of the wooden spoon, it's ready. If not, either wait a little while longer and try again or increase the heat. Try not to overcook the oil. If you plan to make a large quantity of meatballs you may want to use 2 or more frying pans. If you only have the one frying pan and need to make a lot of meatballs, my suggestion would be to change the oil after you make the second batch otherwise you will start to burn the meatballs. You will find that as you add the cold meatballs to the hot oil it will cool the oil somewhat thereby possibly causing some of the meatballs to stick to the frying pan, that's why it is important to keep the oil hot. *(Some people bake their meatballs. This is fine, put the meatballs on a cookie sheet or baking pan that has been sprayed with pam or some other non sticking type of ingredient. Put the meatballs in a 350 degree pre-heated oven until almost golden brown, take them out of the oven and turn them over and put back in the oven for just a short time. Keep an eye on them to make sure they don't overcook.)*

Cooking the meatballs

- Place the meatballs in the frying pan, and put them in a clockwise fashion starting at 12 o'clock, working towards the center of the pan. The reason for this is so that you know where you put the first meatball in and then you can start to turn them when they are ready. While you are waiting for them to cook, if you have any meat left, roll out more meatballs so they will be ready for the next batch..
- When you turn the meatballs to cook on the other side, start with the first one you put in. If the oil is not too deep then you may have to turn them several times to cook on all sides. Use a regular fork for turning the meatballs, and insert it under the meatball, (if you are using a teflon frying pan, you should not be using a metal fork on the teflon surface. Use the recommended type of utensil so you don't damage the frying pan) this will free them from the bottom of the pan without damaging them. If they are hard to move they may not be cooked thoroughly or the oil is not hot enough. If the oil is hot enough, they will not stick to the pan, they should cook quickly and get them to a golden brown before turning.
- Remove the meatballs and place them on the dish with the paper towel to cool and dry. I like to make enough meatballs to have some on the table for the family to come by and pick one up and just pop it in their mouths (I call these dry meatballs because they have no sauce on them) and of course to have enough to go into the pasta sauce.
- Add the meatballs to your pasta sauce 1 hour before serving dinner. This will give them a nice flavor of the sauce without losing their identity. Also if you leave them in the sauce for a long period of time, the meatballs will absorb a lot of sauce, you will not taste all the ingredients, they will taste like meat with sauce on them and will become mushy and fall apart.

Well there you are! Remember that you may not get it right the first few times, but when you do - Wow!
Good luck to all and enjoy, Joe

PS. If you find that you do not like as much garlic in your recipe, do not add the garlic to the meat mixture. Instead when you are heating the oil, add 2 or more cloves of garlic (depending on your taste) to the oil and stir it around. When you are ready to add the meatballs, remove the cloves of garlic. This will give the meatball a nice flavor of garlic without the intensity of it being in the meatball. Try it both ways if you wish and see what works for you.

PPS: All comments, suggestions and recommendations are greatly appreciated.