



“MEATY BALLS” IN MARINARA SAUCE

When I was growing up, my stepfather, Kevin, did much of the family cooking as his job afforded him the time, most afternoons, to begin the dinner prep. I learnt a lot about cooking from sitting on the side-line and critiquing all his hard work, LOL! But as the saying goes, “Karma has no deadline!”, so now, years later, my food gets critiqued on a daily basis ... However, this recipe, from “Kev’s Collection” should silence even your most hardened critics.

Makes 16 – 20 meatballs

- * 1 cup (250 ml) white quinoa or brown rice
- * 2 cups (500 ml) water
- * 1 cup (250 ml) beef-flavoured soya mince granules
- * 1 cup (250 ml) raw rolled oats
- * 3 – 4 Tbsp nutritional yeast (“nooch”), plus extra for garnish, optional
- * 1 Tbsp Marmite or vegan beef stock
- * 1 Tbsp vegan Worcestershire sauce
- * 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- * 1 Tbsp smoked paprika
- * 2 cups (500 ml) hot vegetable stock
- * ½ cup (125 ml) chickpea flour or cake wheat flour
- * 1 medium red onion, finely chopped
- * 1–2 cloves garlic, crushed or finely chopped
- * 2 tsp dry Italian herbs
- * 3 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- * Salt and black pepper to taste
- * 4 cups (4 × 250 ml) marinara sauce
- * 1 Tbsp freshly chopped basil, parsley or origanum, plus extra for serving

- 1** Place the quinoa or brown rice in a pot with 2 cups (500 ml) cold water. Bring to the boil and cook for 10 minutes, then drain and set aside. The grains should be al dente, not fully cooked.
- 2** Place the soya mince granules, oats, nutritional yeast (“nooch”), Marmite, Worcestershire sauce, mustard and smoked paprika in a large bowl. Add the hot stock and stir to combine. Cover with a plate or cling film and set aside for 20 minutes to allow the soya mince and oats to rehydrate and soak up the flavours.
- 3** When the soya mixture is ready, sieve in the flour (to prevent lumps), then add the onion, garlic, dry herbs, quinoa or rice, 2 Tbsp oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Using damp hands, mix until everything is well combined. Place in the fridge for at least 1 hour, or up to 24 hours, to firm up.
- 4** When the mixture is cool, scoop tablespoon-size portions and use wet hands to shape them into balls (roughly the size of a golf ball).
- 5** Heat 1 Tbsp olive oil in a non-stick pan and brown the meatballs in batches. Return all the meatballs to the pan and add the marinara sauce and fresh herbs. Bring the sauce to the boil then lower the heat, cover the pan and simmer for 15 minutes, until the meatballs are cooked through. (If necessary, add small amounts of water to the pan, to prevent sticking.) Serve with spaghetti or your choice of pasta.

NOTES

- Instead of serving with pasta, use the meatballs in sauce to make a kickass sub.
- Replace the homemade marinara sauce with your favourite ready-made pasta sauce.

- Soya mince (textured vegetable protein) comes in a variety of flavours and is both inexpensive and quick to prepare, making it a great standby for busy weeknight meals.
- Ina Paarman liquid beef stock sachets are vegan.