
Party Perfect Meatballs

The Essential Southern Living Cookbook

Servings: 20

Preparation Time: 35 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 50 minutes

To make ahead, prepare the meatballs through Step two. Then freeze in zip-top plastic freezer bags for up to one month. To reheat from frozen, pick up from Step Three and warm the meatballs in the sauce over low heat. To serve, keep warm in a slow cooker, in a Dutch oven over low heat, or in a fondue pot.

1 cup Kalamata olives, pitted
1/2 small red onion, coarsely chopped
3/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons lemon zest
3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
1/2 cup ricotta cheese
2 large eggs
1 1/2 teaspoons Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 pound ground beef
1 pound mild Italian sausage, casings removed
1 can (6 ounce) tomato paste
3 cups beef broth
1/3 cup hot pepper jelly

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Place the olives, red onion, mint, parsley and lemon zest into a food processor. Pulse eight to ten times or until chopped. In a large bowl, stir together the panko, ricotta, eggs, salt, pepper, ground beef, sausage and the olive mixture until well combined. Shape the mixture into one-inch balls and place one inch apart on jelly roll pans lined with aluminum foil.

Bake in the preheated oven for 12 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat a large saucepan over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the tomato paste to the dry pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until the paste begins to brown and coat the bottom of the pan.; Increase the heat to high. Add the beef broth, stirring to loosen bits of tomato paste from the bottom of the pan. Whisk until smooth. Whisk in the hot pepper jelly until combined. Reduce the heat to low. Add the cooked meatballs. Serve warm.

(NOTE: The sauce may be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to three days.)

Meatballs

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 136 Calories; 10g Fat (69.9% calories from fat); 7g Protein; 3g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 44mg Cholesterol; 601mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 1 1/2 Fat.