

Eggplant Meatballs with Tomato Basil Pasta

This vegetarian alternative to traditional meatballs is packed with flavor and fiber thanks to hearty, meaty eggplant that is abundant in the summer months.

YIELD 8 SERVINGS	PREP TIME 20 MIN	TOTAL TIME 40 MIN
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INGREDIENTS

For the Eggplant Meatballs:

4 Tbsp	Olive Oil, <u>divided</u>
2 each	Eggplant, peeled, large dice
3 cloves	Garlic, finely chopped
1 each	Egg, lightly beaten
½ cup	Parmesan Cheese, grated (1 oz.)
½ cup	Whole Wheat Breadcrumbs
¼ cup	Basil, fresh, chopped
1 Tbsp	Italian Seasoning
½ tsp	Kosher Salt

For the Quick Tomato Basil Pasta:

12 oz.	Whole Wheat Spaghetti
2 Tbsp	Olive Oil
4 cloves	Garlic, fresh, minced
1 (28 oz) can	Whole Peeled Tomatoes, undrained
1 (15 oz) can	Diced Tomatoes, no salt added
¼ cup	Basil, fresh, destemmed and roughly chopped
1½ tsp	Italian Seasoning
¼ tsp	Kosher Salt
¼ tsp	Crushed Red Pepper Flakes
1 Tbsp	Balsamic Vinegar
¼ cup	Parmesan Cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS

1. Gather all necessary equipment and ingredients. Prepare all ingredients as described above. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a half sheet tray with parchment paper and spray with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Make the meatballs: Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add half the diced eggplant and cook, stirring often, until the eggplant is browned and very tender, about 6-8 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl. Repeat the process with 2 Tbsp olive oil and remaining eggplant, adding garlic to pan during the last 2 minutes of cooking. Cook until garlic is fragrant. Transfer to the bowl and allow the mixture to cool.
3. Add the egg, grated parmesan, breadcrumbs, basil, Italian seasoning, and salt to the eggplant mixture; stir to combine, lightly mashing the eggplant pieces with a potato masher or fork. Using a small scoop form the mixture into 24 balls, about 2 tablespoons (1 oz.) each, and place on the prepared half sheet tray.
4. Place meatballs into the preheated oven. Cook until they are browned and have reached an internal temperature of 165°F, about 5-7 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, make the pasta & sauce: Bring a large pot of water to a boil and once boiling, add the pasta. Cook until al dente, about 8 minutes, then drain and set aside off the heat in the empty pot.

6. Heat the 2 Tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add the garlic and sauté until lightly golden.
7. Add the whole tomatoes and their juices, diced tomatoes, basil, salt, and red pepper flakes to the pan; use a spoon to roughly break up the whole tomatoes. Simmer the sauce, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes.
8. Remove the pan from the heat and let it cool for at least 5 minutes.
9. Use an immersion blender to blend the sauce until it is mostly smooth. Alternatively, transfer the sauce to a blender and blend to the desired consistency (remove the center of the blender lid and cover with a kitchen towel while blending to allow steam to escape and avoid the possibility of a tomato sauce explosion).
10. Add 2 cups of the tomato sauce to the pot of pasta, tossing to combine evenly. Transfer the dressed pasta to a serving bowl or platter. Top with the meatballs and 1 cup of the tomato sauce. Any remaining sauce can be refrigerated for later use. Finish with the grated parmesan cheese and enjoy!

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size 1 cup pasta with 3-4 meatballs and sauce (472g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	500
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 19g	24%
Saturated Fat 3.5g	18%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 40mg	13%
Sodium 550mg	24%
Total Carbohydrate 68g	25%
Dietary Fiber 13g	46%
Total Sugars 14g	
Includes <1g Added Sugars	1%
Protein 16g	32%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 130mg	10%
Iron 2.6mg	15%
Potassium 990mg	20%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

CONTAINS: MILK, EGG, WHEAT

