

Pasta and Meatballs

Makes 4 servings

A few notes:

- It is important to use 93% lean ground turkey in this recipe; if you use ground turkey breast (99% fat-free) the meatballs will taste dry.
- Remember to plan ahead and allow time to chill the meatballs for about an hour before cooking them. This helps them to firm up a bit, so they will be less likely to break up when cooking.
- Cooked meatballs and sauce can be frozen for up to 2 months in an airtight container. Thaw and gently reheat in a covered pot over medium-low heat.

Ingredients:

For the meatballs:

- 1 slice high-quality white sandwich bread, crusts removed, torn into pieces (*I used a slice of whole wheat bread*)
- 1 1/2 tbsp. milk
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tbsp. minced fresh parsley (*I used 1 tbsp. dried parsley*)
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 1 pound 93 percent lean ground turkey
- 1 tbsp. olive oil

For the pasta and sauce:

- 1 onion, minced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/8 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 12 ounces whole-wheat pasta
- Salt
- 3 tbsp. chopped fresh basil, if you have some on hand

Directions:

1. To make the meatballs, mash the bread and milk together in a large bowl to a smooth paste. Stir in the Parmesan, parsley, egg yolk, garlic, 1/2 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper. Add the ground turkey and combine with your hands until the mixture is uniform. Gently form the mixture into 1 1/2-inch round meatballs (about 12 meatballs), and refrigerate them until firm, about 1 hour.
2. Heat the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until just smoking. Brown the meatballs on all sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer the meatballs to a paper towel-lined plate, leaving the fat in the skillet.
3. To make the pasta and sauce, add the onion to the fat left in the skillet and cook over medium

heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the crushed tomatoes and diced tomatoes with their juice. Bring to a simmer and cook until the sauce has thickened slightly, about 10 minutes.

4. Add the meatballs to the sauce and simmer, turning the meatballs occasionally, until they are cooked through, about 20 minutes. Season the sauce with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to boil. Add the pasta and 1 tbsp. salt and cook until al dente. Reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water, then drain the pasta and return it to the pot.
6. Add the basil (if using) and several large spoonfuls of the sauce (without the meatballs) to the pasta and toss to combine, adding some of the reserved cooking water if needed to loosen the sauce. Divide the pasta between four individual bowls, top each bowl with 3 meatballs and additional sauce, and serve.

Recipe from [Kristine's Kitchen](#), slightly adapted from [The America's Test Kitchen Healthy Family Cookbook](#)