

Tiny Spanish Meatballs in Almond Sauce

Recipe from *Tapas: a Collection of over 100 Essential Recipes* (Bath, UK: Parragon Books Ltd, 2009)

Meatballs

Note: I used Great Value cocktail meatballs for the video, but I have made them from scratch as well. I browned the pre-fab meatballs in a little olive oil, just like the original recipe. Although the original recipe specifies Spanish olive oil, I used Bertolli, which is a blend of olive oils from different countries.

2 oz white or brown bread, crusts removed
3 tablespoons water
1 lb. lean ground pork
One large onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove
2 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped, plus extra to garnish
1 egg, beaten
Freshly grated nutmeg
Salt and pepper
Flour for coating
2 tablespoons Spanish olive oil
Squeeze of lemon juice

To prepare the meatballs, soak the bread in the water in a bowl for 5 minutes. With your hands, squeeze out the water and return the bread to the dried bowl. Add the pork, onion, garlic, parsley, and egg, then season well with grated nutmeg and a little salt and pepper. Knead the ingredients well together to form a smooth mixture.

Spread some flour on a plate. With floured hands, shape the meat mixture into about 30 equal-size balls, then roll each meatball in flour until coated.

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottom skillet and cook the meatballs in batches for 4-5 minutes, or until browned on all sides. Using a slotted spoon, remove the meatballs from the skillet and set aside.

Almond Sauce

2 tablespoons Spanish olive oil
1 oz. white or brown bread, torn into pieces
4 oz. blanched almonds
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped (I used minced garlic from a jar.)
5 fluid oz. dry white wine (I used dry sherry, which I often substitute for dry white wine in cooking.)
Salt and pepper
15 fluid oz. vegetable stock. (I used carton vegetable stock and made it an even 16 oz—two cups.)

To make the almond sauce, heat the olive oil in the skillet. Add the bread and the almonds to the skillet and cook gently, stirring frequently, until golden brown. Add the garlic and cook for an additional 30 seconds, then pour in the wine and boil for 1-2 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and let cool slightly.

Transfer the almond mixture to a food processor. Pour in the vegetable stock and blend until smooth. Return the sauce to the skillet. Carefully add the cooked meatballs and let simmer for 25 minutes or until tender. Season the sauce with salt and pepper if necessary.

Transfer the meatballs and almond sauce to a warmed serving dish, add a squeeze of lemon juice to taste, and sprinkle with chopped parsley to garnish. Serve piping hot, with chunks of crusty bread to mop up the sauce.