



Turkey Meatballs in Tomato Basil Sauce

Prep time: 20 min | **Cook time:** 45-85 min | **Total Time:** 65-105 min | **Servings:** 6-8 (about 20 meatballs)

Ingredients

Turkey Meatballs

- 1 lb Italian turkey sausage (you can use mild, hot or sweet depending on your mood)
- 1 lb ground turkey (93% lean)
- 1/2 cup Italian seasoned breadcrumbs (use gluten-free if needed)
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp Olive oil
- 2 large garlic cloves, grated
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese (can be omitted for dairy-free)

Tomato Basil Sauce

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 smashed garlic cloves
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped and divided
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tsp ground fennel seeds
- Two 28 oz cans crushed tomatoes, we use Cento brand
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter (optional, leave out for dairy-free)



Directions

1. Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees F. Prep the Ingredients for the turkey meatballs. Finely chop one small onion. Grate 1/4 cup of Parmesan cheese then grate 2 large garlic cloves using a microplane. Chop 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves. I like to use a mezzaluna to easily chop herbs, but you can also use a knife.
2. Place all the turkey meatball ingredients in a large mixing bowl and combine with your hands. I like to mix all the dry ingredients together first and then add them to the rest of the ingredients. Work quickly and don't overwork the meat or it will become a mushy texture.
3. Using a medium cookie scoop, take heaping scoops of the mixture and roll it in your hands to form a ball. Place meatballs on a large nonstick cookie sheet, I use a 17.25" x 11.5". Recipe should make around 20 meatballs. Place on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 20-30 minutes until the internal temperature reaches 165 degrees F.
4. While the meatballs are cooking, get your sauce started. Chop one medium onion. Smash and peel 3 garlic cloves. Chop 1/2 cup of fresh basil leaves. Grind 2 tsp of dried fennel seeds if you are unable to find ground fennel seeds. I use a [magic bullet](#) for this.
5. Heat 1/4 cup of olive oil in a medium dutch oven or pot. Add the chopped onion and smashed garlic cloves and cook for about 5 minutes until onions are starting to soften. Add 1 tsp salt, 1/2 tsp black pepper, 2 tsp dried oregano and 2 tsp ground fennel seeds and stir, cooking about another minute.
6. Add two 28 oz cans of crushed tomatoes. Stir in 1/4 tsp of sugar and 1/4 cup of chopped fresh basil. Add the cooked meatballs to the sauce. Stir and bring up to a simmer. Simmer for 20 minutes to 1 hour.
7. Add in 4 tablespoons of butter and for the last ten minutes of simmering. This is optional but it adds a velvety texture and balances out acidic taste. Taste and adjust any seasoning as needed. Add the remaining 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil right before serving.
8. Serve over cooked pasta or as an appetizer.