

Meatless Meatballs

<http://userealbutter.com/2021/08/29/vegetarian-meatballs-recipe/>

adapted from [In Jennie's Kitchen](#)

meatless meatballs

2 cups cooked lentils, puréed (recipe below)
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
2/3 cup plain breadcrumbs
1/2 cup crumbled pressed firm tofu* (or 1/2 cup fresh ricotta)
2/3 cup grated Parmesan
1 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup pine nuts (optional)
salt
freshly ground black pepper
canola oil for frying
marinara sauce (recipe below)

* Wrap a block of firm tofu with paper towels or a clean kitchen towel and set on a plate. Place another plate on top of the tofu. Balance some weight on the top plate (not too much or you will crush the tofu) and let it press for 30 minutes. Unwrap the tofu and crumble into a bowl. Season with salt.

Make the meatballs: In a large bowl, mix the puréed lentils, eggs, breadcrumbs, crumbled tofu, Parmesan, parsley, pine nuts (if using), and salt and pepper together. Cover the mixture and refrigerate from 2 hours to overnight.

Shape the mixture into 1.5-inch balls (about 25 grams). Heat 1/2-inch of canola or vegetable oil in a skillet or sauté pan over medium heat. Depending on the size of your pan, you may have to work in batches. When the oil is hot, place the “meatballs” in the pan and fry until the bottoms are browned (a few minutes). Turn the “meatballs” once and brown the other sides. Remove to paper towels to drain. Add the “meatballs” to the marinara sauce and simmer for 30 minutes. Makes about 30 “meatballs”. Can be stored after frying in an airtight container refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 6 months.

cooked lentils

i use [Jennie's method](#)

1 cup dry French lentils (puy lentils)**, picked over and rinsed
3 cups vegetable stock
1 bay leaf
1 clove garlic, smashed
1 shallot, sliced
salt
freshly ground black pepper

** I've had the best luck with French lentils. I have used green lentils before and they cooked much faster, so it's important to avoid overcooking and to also drain off any excess liquid or else your "meatballs" will fall apart.

Cook the lentils: Place the lentils, stock, bay leaf, garlic, and shallot in a 3-quart saucepan. Set over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes or until the lentils are tender. Allow them to rest for 10 minutes to absorb any remaining liquid. Strain off excess liquid and season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes 2 1/2 cups.

marinara sauce

from [this recipe](#)

1/3 cup olive oil

3/4 cup sweet onion, diced

4 cloves garlic, minced

28 oz. crushed tomatoes

3 tbsps tomato paste

3/4 cup fresh basil, torn

kosher salt

freshly ground black pepper

Make the sauce: Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan or skillet over medium heat. Sauté the onions until golden in color (about 7-8 minutes). Add the garlic, tomatoes, tomato paste, and basil. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer. At this point, add the "meatballs" and simmer for 30 minutes. Makes about 4 cups.