



sharing our Greek culinary heritage

KO's Spiced Meatballs with Baby Eggplants

*(A recipe interpreted from an unforgettable lunch at
Diporto, Athens, Greece)*

You will need...

800 - 900g full-fat beef mince
4 cloves garlic, finely crushed or processed
3 brown onions, finely grated or processed
2 eggs
1/2 cup breadcrumbs
3 level teaspoons salt
5 level teaspoons cumin
1 cup extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
750ml tomato passata
2 small-medium purple onions
Extra salt
1/2 a bunch continental parsley, leaves only
10-12 baby eggplants

Preparing the Spiced Meatballs

- Combine the mince-meat, garlic, brown onions, eggs, breadcrumbs, salt and cumin well
- Add half a cup EVOO to a baking pan and heat on medium
- While the oil is heating up, roll the meatball mixture into balls of approximately 4cm diameter and place them in the pan
- When the meatballs have browned on one side, turn them over and cook them until they brown a **little** on the other side; then turn the heat off

Preparing the Spiced Meatballs with Baby Eggplants

- Pour the passata evenly over the meatballs
- Peel and cut the purple onions in half; cut each half lengthwise; and then cut each quarter into 3 equal segments, so onion pieces have a 'square shape'
- Separate all the onion layers and lay them across the top of the meatballs
- Season with salt
- Scatter continental parsley leaves across the top of the baking pan
- Cut the tops of the eggplants and discard them; slice the eggplants in half, lengthwise
- Arrange them across the top of the baking pan, cut side facing downwards
- Season with more salt
- Pour the remaining olive oil across the top of the eggplants
- Cover the pan with aluminium foil, ensuring there are vents from which the steam can be released
- Bake in a oven pre-heated to 200°C fan-forced for 50 minutes
- Remove the foil and gently embed all of the eggplants into the 'tomato olive oil sauce'
- Bake for a further 20 minutes uncovered

Serving the Spiced Meatballs with Baby Eggplants

- Serve the 'Spiced Meatballs with Baby Eggplants' with KO's Risoni-Rice, Greek yoghurt and crusty bread to sop up all the oily-tomato sauce

Key Points

- When processing the onions, do not 'over-process' them, as they will start to release their fluids and become wet and mushy. You want the onions to be chopped finely, but remain dry
- When browning the meatballs, brown them well on one side and then brown them less on the other side (the side that faces downwards when all the other ingredients are added). During the baking phase, the bottom of the meatballs will brown further (so, if you overcook them on the cooktop, you risk burning them during the baking phase)
- The baby eggplants can be replaced with regular eggplants cut into thick slices (1.5cm thickness)
- The more oil you add to this dish, the more delicious it becomes. When we had this dish at Diporto, it was drowning (in the nicest possible way) in oil infused with all the flavours of the dish and we absolutely loved sopping it all up with crusty bread. Here I have suggested that 1 cup of EVOO is a good starting point for this dish. You could easily increase that to 1 1/2 - 2 cups if you wanted
- Recipe can be halved, but you may need to add a little extra passata - 400-450ml