



Transform classic puttanesca sauce into a topping for casual meatball sliders

Puttanesca meatball sliders

MAKES 16 | 1½ HOURS

These work well as a main course or as an appetizer. Close them with long toothpicks if you like.

SAUCE

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ tsp. each red chile flakes and fennel seeds, crushed (use a mortar and pestle or clean coffee grinder)
- 1 can (28 oz.) whole peeled tomatoes, puréed
- ¼ cup chopped pitted kalamata olives
- 1 tbsp. roughly chopped capers
- ¼ tsp. each kosher salt and pepper

MEATBALLS

- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ cup panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs)
- ½ cup grated pecorino cheese
- 1 garlic clove, minced

- 2 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ½ tsp. each kosher salt and pepper
- ⅓ lb. each ground chuck and ground pork
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

SERVING

- 16 fresh basil leaves about the size of rolls
- 16 small (2 in. wide) soft dinner rolls, split but 1 side attached, and broiled to toast
- ¾ cup shaved pecorino cheese (use a vegetable peeler)

1. **Make** sauce: In a 4- to 5-qt. pan over medium heat, cook onion in oil until softened, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in garlic, chile flakes, and fennel; cook until garlic softens, about 1 minute. Stir in remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, until thick, 15 to 25 minutes.
2. **Make** meatballs while sauce simmers: In a large bowl, combine egg, milk, and panko and let sit a few minutes. Stir in

grated pecorino, garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper. Add meats, breaking up with your fingers, and mix well with your hands. With wet hands, roll meat mixture into 16 balls, each about 1½ in. wide.

3. **Heat** oil in a large, heavy frying pan (preferably nonstick) over medium-high heat. Cook meatballs until well browned all over, turning as needed, 6 to 8 minutes total; reduce heat if needed. With a slotted spoon, transfer meatballs to paper towels.

4. **Stir** meatballs into sauce, return to a simmer over medium-low heat, and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until sauce is very thick, 10 to 15 minutes.

5. **Put** a basil leaf in each roll. Set a meatball and a generous spoonful of sauce on each leaf, then add a little shaved pecorino.

PER MAIN-COURSE SERVING (3 SLIDERS) 510 CAL., 45% (230 CAL.) FROM FAT; 22 G PROTEIN; 26 G FAT (7.9 G SAT.); 46 G CARBO (3.5 G FIBER); 1,373 MG SODIUM; 74 MG CHOL.