Fair Trade Meat Balls in Tomato Sauce

These meat balls are so very easy to make and every time I serve them, they have that wow factor, served steaming hot with a little sprinkling of parsley over top.

The secret to these meatballs is not to roll them to tight, just about the size of a golf ball and just squeezed enough to hold the shape.

Now the Sauce is a dream, this sauce can be used for so many dishes, eg, as a pizza sauce, over chicken fillets, over sausages, meat or veggie. The only thing is its not so good for is in a dessert!!

I always advocate that any recipe should not sit still, please use each recipe as a base and then swap and change it to fit your mood, what you have in and what is accessible to you. The recipe then becomes ‘Yours’ “I love meatballs, but I love mine more”.

NOTE: Some Fairtrade and fair trade ingredients are easier to get than others – If they aren’t available in your supermarket, try your local fair trade shop, whole food shop, Traidcraft or Ethical Superstore. And if you still can’t find them, why not request that they get some in?

Ingredients

500g minced beef

500g sausages (vary the taste by using sausages of your choice, e.g., pork and leek, chorizo style sausage)

1 large onion

3 cloves of garlic

1 large tin Fairtrade chopped tomatoes chopped tomato

1 jar of MERU HERBS Tomato sauce or small carton of passata

½ tube Fairtrade tomato puree

1tsp Cape Garden Herbs from Ukuva (via JTS)

1tsp of chopped chili (optional)

1 bottle of Fairtrade red wine (one class for the sauce and the rest for the chef, ALWAYS cook with wine you are prepared to drink, there’s no such thing as cooking wine!)

3tbsp Fairtrade olive oil

Salt and pepper PLEASE USE UKUVA I AFRICA seasonings (fabulous range and choice of flavours)

Method

Split the sausage and put the filling in a bowl, add the mince and mix both together well.

Roll into as many balls as you can. Don’t make the balls too small as they can become tough and hard. About the size of a golf ball is the best.

Add the oil to the frying pan and heat, add the meatballs and cook until brown. They don’t have to be cooked all the way through as they will continue to cook in the sauce. If you don’t like to fry then put the oil in the bottom of a roasting tin and bake in a hot over 160c Gas 6 giving the pan a shake from time to time.

For the Sauce

Chop the onion and the garlic, put 1tbs oil in a pan and fry the onion

Add the chopped tomato, passata and the puree along with the chili (if using) and the wine.

Add the mixed herbs and season with salt and pepper allow simmer and thicken.

When the sauce is ready put in the browned meat balls, bake in the oven for about 30 minutes to allow the meatballs to cook and heat through.

Vegetarian & vegan alternatives to meat balls that you can use with this sauce

Roasted Mediterranean vegetables (peppers, aubergines, courgettes, red onion etc)

Roasted root vegetables (red onion, carrots, parsnips, butternut squash etc)

For the above, Cut into bite size chunks, season well with FAIR TRADE HERBS OR UKUVA I AFRICA SEASSONING and 3 tablespoons of FAIR TRADE OLIVE OIL. There needs to be about ½ kg of vegetables in total but this depends on how you like the ratio of sauce to content. Combine all of the above and spread evenly on an oven tray, keeping one layer so the vegetables roast not steam, bake in a hot oven 180c gas 6/7 until slightly charged. Replace the meatballs with this medley of vegetables.

Or you could try using 500g of Chestnut Mushrooms:

Leaving the mushrooms whole, wipe with paper towel (never wash mushrooms) drizzle over Fairtrade Olive Oil. Season well with one of UKUVA I AFRICA range of salt and pepper. Sauté the mushroom in a frying pan on the stove or if you’re not keen on frying, place the mushroom on an oven tray and roast in the over 180c gas 6/7 for about 15 minutes. Watch them carefully as you want the mushrooms to remain succulent and not dry (oven baked mushrooms can dry out quickly) Use these Mushrooms in place of the meatballs, they have a lovely texture and in keeping them whole they have an attractive appearance in the finished dish,

To serve

Fair trade spaghetti or other pasta shapes – these may be available from your local fair trade shop or whole food shop, or try buying online from Ethical Superstore or Traidcraft. Fun fact: fair trade pasta is made from quinoa meaning it’s naturally gluten free.

Fair trade rice – try the fantastic Kilombero rice from JTS. If you use this rice, you may be able to take part in the 90kg rice challenge and play your part in sending a Malawian child to school.

Crusty French bread and beautiful butter (this never fails to please)

MOST OF ALL ENJOY THIS RECIPE AND AS I AWAYS SAY “ GIVE IT LEGS” AND WALK IT INTO YOUR OWN RECIPE.

SANDY XXX