

Meatball Subs

Serves 4

2 cups pasta sauce (recipe follows)
1 recipe meatballs (recipe follows)
4 sub/hoagie rolls
olive oil
1 garlic clove, cut in half
4 slices mozzarella or provolone cheese

Sauce

Makes about 3.5 cups

2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbsp. tomato paste
1 (29 oz.) can crushed tomatoes
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
2 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. basil
1 bay leaf
1/4 cup water or broth
salt and pepper to taste

Meatballs

1/4 cup breadcrumbs
1/3 cup milk
1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
1/2 red bell pepper, finely diced
1 small onion, finely diced (about 1/2 cup)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 egg
3 Tbsp. chopped parsley
1/4 cup parmesan or romano cheese
1 lb. ground beef
1 tsp. oregano
salt and pepper to taste

To make the sauce: Heat the olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until tender. Stir in the garlic and tomato paste and cook off for about a minute or two. Add the remaining ingredients. Bring the sauce to a low boil, then reduce to a simmer. Simmer 20 minutes or longer. For a thicker sauce, simmer covered. For a thinner sauce, simmer uncovered.

To make the meatballs: Place the breadcrumbs and milk in a bowl and let sit for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the bell pepper and onion and sauté until tender, then stir in the garlic for about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.

To the bowl with the breadcrumbs and milk, add the sautéed vegetables, egg, parsley, cheese, ground beef, oregano, salt (about a tsp.) and pepper to taste. Form the mixture into 12 meatballs.

You can bake the meatballs (400° for about 12 minutes), pan fry them, or just plop them in the sauce to cook. This is your choice. I usually bake them about 10 minutes and then finish them off in the sauce.

To assemble the subs: Drizzle a little bit of olive oil over the split hoagie rolls and place in a hot oven or under the broiler until toasty. Immediately rub the buns with the cut garlic clove.

Slice the cheese in half (into triangles) and place 2 triangles on each roll. Stick the buns in the oven or under the broiler once more, just until the cheese melts.

Spoon ½ cup of sauce and 3 meatballs into each roll, and serve.