



The Meatball Shop Spills The Deets On Two Savory Recipes

When you have guests in town and you're trying to impress them with a delicious meal, it wouldn't surprise us if The Meatball Shop was one of your first stops. From the hearty meatball dishes to the fun cocktails (a pitcher of Bitches Brew, anyone?), the restaurant's offerings can satisfy even the most robust appetite. And, thanks to the friendly folks behind the shop, you can now recreate some of its most beloved dishes in the comfort of your own home.

Ahead, two ridiculously tasty recipes for the vegetarian balls and the Q-balls. Whether or not you'll be taking all the credit when your dinner guests start singing the dishes' praises is up to you.



PHOTO: COURTESY THE MEATBALL SHOP.

Mediterranean Bison Balls

- 2 pounds lean ground bison
- ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ⅛ cup chopped mint
- ¼ cup chopped toasted almonds
- ¼ cup chopped raisins
- 1 cups cooked saffron rice (recipe below)
- 2 eggs
- ⅛ tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp coarse salt

Make saffron rice. Can be done a day ahead.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Drizzle olive oil into a 9x13-inch baking dish; using your hand, evenly coat entire surface. Set aside.

In a large bowl, use your hands to mix bison, parsley, mint, almonds, raisins, saffron rice, eggs, black pepper, and salt until fully incorporated. Roll mixture into firmly packed one-and-a-half-inch balls.

Place meatballs in prepared baking dish, taking care to line them up snugly so that they are touching one another in even rows vertically and horizontally to form a grid. Transfer baking dish to oven. Bake until meatballs are firm and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of a meatball reads 165 degrees.

Saffron Rice

- ½ cup basmati rice
- 1 pinch saffron
- 1 cup water
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp olive oil

Place all ingredients together in a small pot, bring to a boil, then simmer covered until all the water is absorbed. This will yield one cup cooked. Let cool before mixing in.

Saffron Yogurt Tomato Sauce

Tomato Sauce

- 1 yellow onion, small dice (about 1½ cups)
- 1 bay leaf (fresh or dry)
- 1 sprig fresh oregano (or ½ tsp dry)
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp salt
- 2-28 oz cans of canned tomatoes, chopped (preferably San Marzano)

Cook the onions with the olive oil, oregano, bay, garlic, and salt over a medium heat in a large pot (12 quart) stirring constantly until soft and translucent (about 15 minutes). Add the tomato paste and continue cooking for five minutes. Add the canned tomatoes, and stir constantly until the sauce begins to boil. Continue cooking for one hour, stirring every four or five minutes so that the sauce does not burn. Season with extra salt to taste.

Saffron Yogurt Sauce

- 1 cup nonfat yogurt
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp water
- Small pinch of saffron
- 1 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tbsp chopped mint
- ⅛ tsp coarse salt
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Place saffron, water, and lemon juice together, and let bloom for five minutes. Combine all the ingredients in a mixing bowl, and whisk until incorporated.

To serve, place cooked meatballs in a serving bowl and ladle over the tomato sauce. Drizzle on the yogurt saffron sauce to finish.