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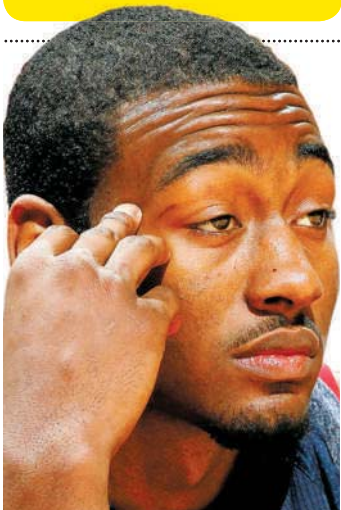
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Weekend



FRANCHISE IN FLUX
The coach is gone,
but the Wizards' woes
aren't going away **10**

DOUBLE WHAMMY
Metro's board clears
the path for a fare hike
as the Red Line stalls **9**

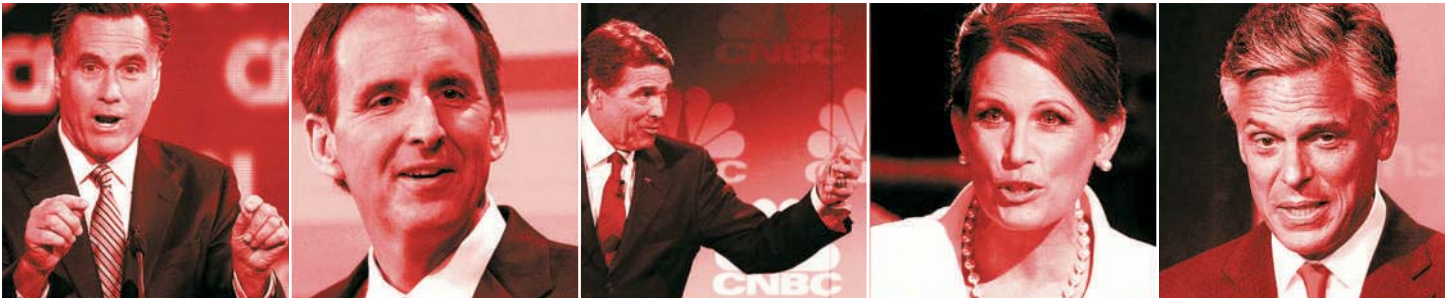


ROUND-DINNER TIME
Bowl guests over by
rolling up some spicy,
worldly meatballs **16**

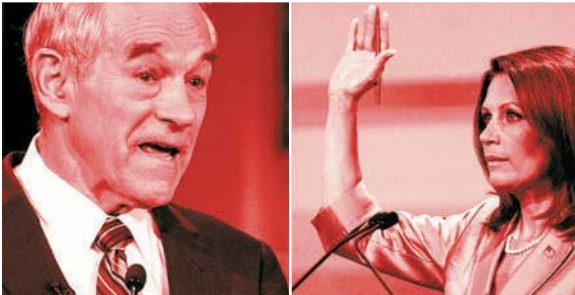
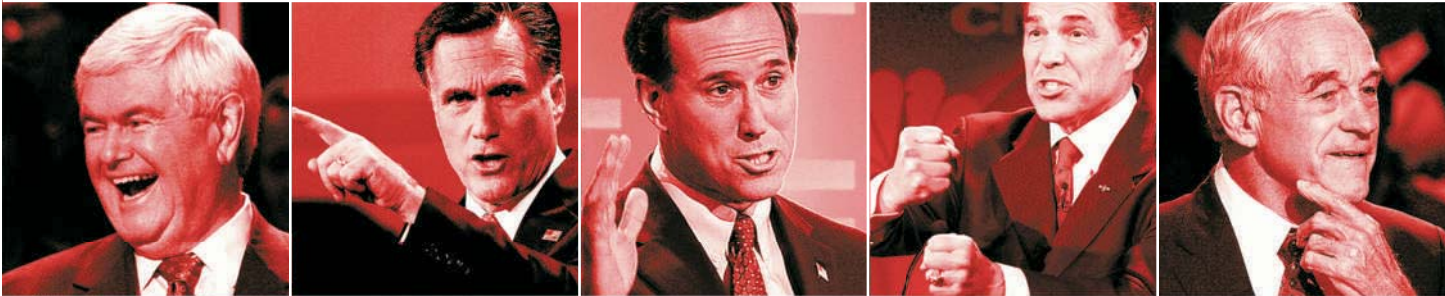
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FOR EXTENDED FORECAST, SEE PAGE 33

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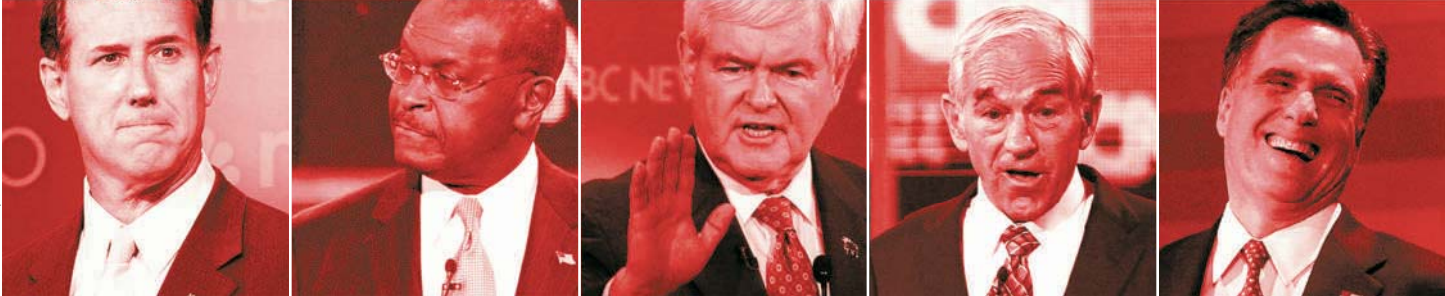


Enough



Already?

GOP DEBATES' POPULARITY MAY BE A MIXED BLESSING **7**



GETTY IMAGES EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

1 **Weekend** **Out**

01.27.12

HAVE
A BALL

Roll up some
juicy meatballs
for an easy,
worldly party
snack **16**

lookout food

Round For Glory

Roll up a few homemade meatballs to bring spicy style to your next party

Step away from the Chef Boyardee can and stop humming “On Top of Spaghetti” already. The meatball — the comfort food classic common to cuisines as disparate as Afghani (lamb kofte kebabs) and Andalusian (saffron albondigas) — has rolled back into style at restaurants and at parties.

And while making your own meaty orbs takes time, the process isn't difficult, and it yields a crowd-pleasing party food. “Everyone loves a good meatball,” says Casa Nonna executive chef Amy Brandwein (1250 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-629-2505). “They're simple but also very complicated.”

To begin, you'll need to start pressing the flesh, so to speak. Basically, a meatball involves finely ground meat, which boasts a consistency that mixes well with spices and forms easily into rounds.

The type of meat you choose can be based on what you like or the type of cuisine: Pork is nice in Asian meatballs; lamb lends a pungent earthiness to Mediterranean versions; and a combination of beef, veal and pork works well for Italian-style polpetta.

Game — venison, goat or duck — can also work well, though you

will have to add more fat to these lean meats to assure flavor and moistness in the final product. This is easily accomplished by grinding the skin along with duck breast and legs, adding goat cheese when you're working with goat or incorporating some butter into your venison mix.

To get your ground meat to hold its shape, you'll need binding. Like many meatball-makers, Daniel Holzman, executive chef/co-owner of the three Meatball Shops in New York, and co-author of “The Meatball Shop Cookbook” (\$28, Ballantine) uses a combo of eggs and bread crumbs as “mortar.” “Eggs are glue,” he says. “The perfect ratio is one egg for every one pound of meat and 1/4 cup of crumbs.”

Whether you want to make mini-meatballs (1/2 inch around) or super-sized spheres (1 1/2 inches wide or larger), firmly pack the meat as you roll it in your hands. This ensures that the meatballs will cook evenly

and hold together. An ice cream scoop makes the process neater and keeps balls similar in size.

The best meatballs possess a juiciness that can be

TANDOORI LAMB BALLS

Spices such as cumin, coriander, turmeric and paprika give this subcontinent-style version a flavorful kick.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds ground lamb
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Juice from one lemon
- 1/4 cup tandoori spice mix (recipe follows)
- 2 teaspoons salt

Makes About Two Dozen Meatballs

Preheat the oven to 450 F. Drizzle the olive oil into a 9x13-inch baking dish, coating evenly. Set aside.

Combine the ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand.

Roll into firm, golf ball-size meatballs (about 1 1/2 inches). Place the balls in the baking dish, being careful to line them up snugly and in even rows to form a grid.

Roast for 20 minutes, or until the meatballs are firm and cooked through. A meat thermometer inserted into the center of a meatball should read 165 F.

Cool five minutes before serving.

Tandoori Spice Mix

Combine 2 teaspoons each of ground ginger, ground cumin, ground coriander, sweet paprika, ground turmeric and cayenne pepper. The mix will keep in an airtight container for up to six months.

Meat the World

Around the globe, meatballs are a staple. “They're the ultimate peasant food,” says Daniel Holzman of New York City's Meatball Shop. “They use scraps, they're not expensive, and they carry any kind of sauce.” Shown are his worldly faves from his “Meatball Shop Cookbook” and how to pair them.

difficult to achieve. Brandwein's polpetta, an Italian style ball, boasts an unusual secret ingredient that helps keep things juicy. “You put milk-soaked bread into the mix to make the texture soft,” she says. “Dried bread crumbs can make it come together, but they won't make it tender.”

The Source's (575 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; 202-637-6100) executive chef, Scott Drewno, suggests another technique. “We always sear our meatballs before we bake them to get a good crust on the outside,” he says. “That helps seal in moisture.” He recommends using an oil to complement the flavors of your meatball, such as a peanut oil for recipes from the Far East and olive oil for Italian ones.

There are two main ways to cook meatballs: braising or baking. Drewno prefers the former. “That slow simmering really gives you a moist meatball,” he says.

Silver Spring food blogger Jill Grozalsky of Cuisine Queen (Cuisinequeenblog.com) endorses baking because it creates a crispy, caramelized exterior. However, she warns that it's easy to dry out your meatballs in this final stage of the process. “Check them five minutes before you think you need to take them out,” she says. “Nothing ever cooks for exactly the length of time in the recipe.”

Meatballs can be served in many different ways, whether you plop them in a sandwich, spoon them over pasta, float them in soup or simply munch on them appetizer-style like you would at Ikea. “I like them on skewers or toothpicks,” Grozalsky says. “That way, if you have a drink and you're mingling, you don't get your hands dirty.”

NEVIN MARTELL



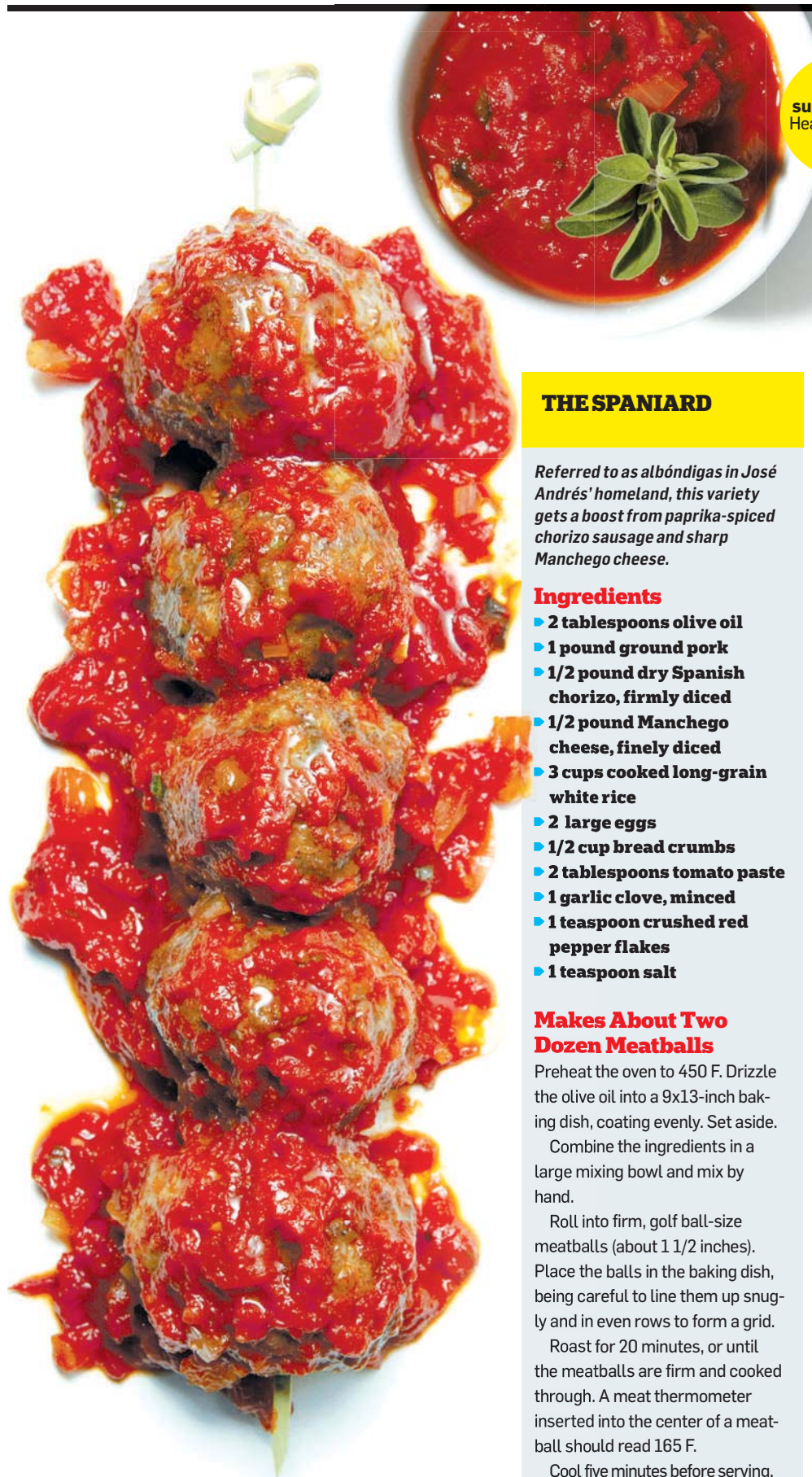
“Everyone loves a good meatball. They're simple but also very complicated.”

— AMY BRANDWEIN,
EXECUTIVE CHEF AT CASA NONNA



Saucy supplement:
Cilantro yogurt raita





**Saucy
supplement:**
Hearty tomato
sauce

THE SPANIARD

Referred to as albóndigas in José Andrés' homeland, this variety gets a boost from paprika-spiced chorizo sausage and sharp Manchego cheese.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1/2 pound dry Spanish chorizo, firmly diced
- 1/2 pound Manchego cheese, finely diced
- 3 cups cooked long-grain white rice
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt

Makes About Two Dozen Meatballs

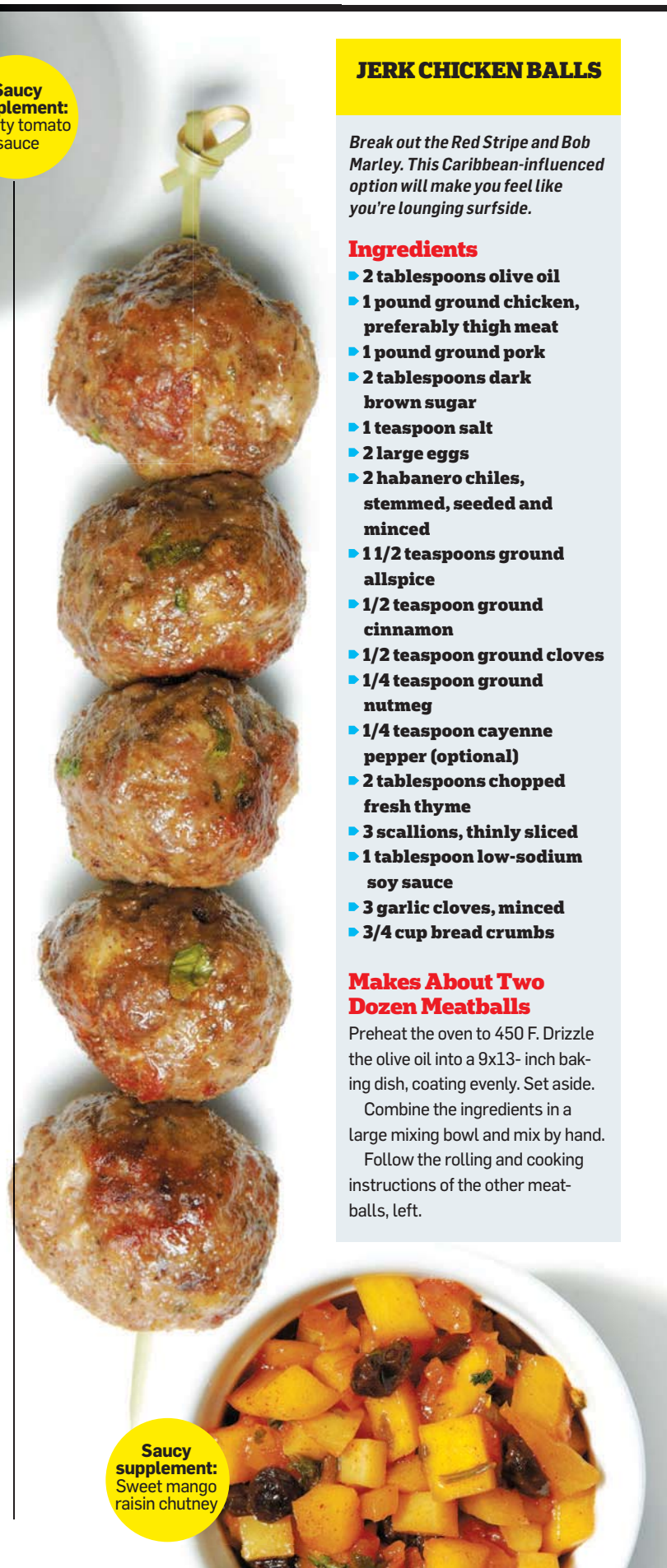
Preheat the oven to 450 F. Drizzle the olive oil into a 9x13-inch baking dish, coating evenly. Set aside.

Combine the ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand.

Roll into firm, golf ball-size meatballs (about 1 1/2 inches). Place the balls in the baking dish, being careful to line them up snugly and in even rows to form a grid.

Roast for 20 minutes, or until the meatballs are firm and cooked through. A meat thermometer inserted into the center of a meatball should read 165 F.

Cool five minutes before serving.



**Saucy
supplement:**
Sweet mango
raisin chutney

JERK CHICKEN BALLS

Break out the Red Stripe and Bob Marley. This Caribbean-influenced option will make you feel like you're lounging surfside.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound ground chicken, preferably thigh meat
- 1 pound ground pork
- 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 2 habanero chiles, stemmed, seeded and minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3/4 cup bread crumbs

Makes About Two Dozen Meatballs

Preheat the oven to 450 F. Drizzle the olive oil into a 9x13-inch baking dish, coating evenly. Set aside.

Combine the ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand.

Follow the rolling and cooking instructions of the other meatballs, left.