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A Super Bowl Party for Meatball Maniacs

Gear up for the big game with meatball recipes and tips from New York's Meatball Shop



 $oldsymbol{1}$ its that time of year again, when you start thinking about what to make for your Super Bowl party. Last year you probably made wings. The year before that you probably made...wings. Those tasty nuggets have been a go-to for football parties since the early 1960s, when a Buffalo bar purportedly invented the Buffalo chicken wing. Well, it's 2012, for goodness' sake, time for a change!

What to make instead? Meatballs are riding a popularity wave again, so we turned to the Meatball Shop's chefs, Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow, for advice. After successfully opening three restaurants in the New York area, the duo published The Meatball Shop Cookbook and they have a thing or a hundred to say about how best to feed feisty football fans.

So this year, go about game-day business as usual. Chill some beers, put out bowls of chips and guac, and follow these meatball pros' recipes and tips. Just be sure to let your guests know that they'd better come hungry.

Recipe and Party Serving Tips:

✓ Plan Ahead

Holzman recommends making meatballs a couple of days before the big game. They can be frozen up to two months in advance—but make sure they are fully cooked first, and well wrapped in plastic and foil. (Never freeze them raw, as they will not hold together when thawed.) To reheat, you've got several options. Simply microwave them for 4 minutes, or 2 minutes longer if frozen. Or, preheat the oven to 300°F and cook the meatballs in a covered pan with 3 tablespoons of water for about 20 minu

Fan-Friendly

You can't meet everyone's dietary needs, but you should assume a few guests won't eat red meat, so double up on batches of vegetarian and chicken meatballs, and be sure to replenish the platers as they disappear. Those watching their diet will appreciate the lentil-based veggie balls, which are packed with fiber and protein. Any fish or chicken meatball recipes are going to be much healthier than a lamb ball. And use a tomato sauce, which is fairly healthy, instead of a cream-based sauce.

Stick a Fork in Them
These party delights are fairly mess-free, unlike those sticky wings. If you are serving them mini-sized or passed, then offer them with toothpicks; but if you are going for the regular-sized balls, Chernow recommends giving each of your guests a fork and telling them to "get down and dirty."

✓ Be a Halftime Hero

Chernow is a big proponent of sandwiching meatballs in a hero sub. 'If you really wanna get crazy with it, you can go and buy a huge, long hero, stuff it, and then just cut the hero in pieces," he says. "People will really love you

When crafting a meatball sandwich, follow these simple rules:

- Make sure there's an even ratio between bread, main ingredient, garnish, and sauce.
 The bread is just as important as the stuffing. It should be crusty on the outside, soft on the inside. The Meatball Shop guys also recommend trying focaccia.
- $_{3}$. It's important to keep the sandwich intact, so spread sauce over the meat and not under it, which
- would make the bread soggier.
 4. There's no need to go crazy with toppings. They recommend adding potato chips on top of the meatballs for crunch.
- 5. Keep time short between construction and consumption.
 6. Size is key. A big sandwich may look delicious, but it has to fit in your mouth, so make sure it's no more than 2 ½ inches high.

☑ Life After the Party

While chances are small that you'll have any leftover meatballs, if you do, the chefs recommend cutting them up and making meatball frittatas or salads. (And if you have a dog, meatballs are, of course, a four-legged favorite.)





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Sometimes you gotta take a break from the hard-core carnivordom, and these are the way to go-just ask our staff, who eat them around the clock. These... <u>more</u>:

ingredients

- a cups tentils
 t/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
 t large onion, chopped
 c carrots, chopped
 c celery stalks, chopped
- garlic clove, minced
- tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste 8 ounces Button Mushrooms, wiped clean and sliced
- 3 large eggs 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

preparation

Combine the lentils and 2 quarts water in a medium stockpot and bring to a boil over high he Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the lentils are soft (but not falling apart), about 25 to Drain the lentils and allow to cool.

Add 1/a cup of the olive oil to a large frying pan and sauté the onions, carrots, celery, garlic, thyme, and said over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, for about 10 minutes, until the vegetables are under am disturbed ingining to brown. Add the tomato paste and continue to cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Add the mushoroms and cook, stirring frequently, for 15 more minutes, or until all the liquid is absorbed. Transfer the attiture to a large bowl and allow to cool to room temperature. When cool, add the lentils to the vegetable mixture.

Add the eggs, Parmesan, bread crumbs, parsley, and walnuts to the cooled vegetable mixture and mix by hand until thoroughly incorporated. Place in the refrigerator for 25 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Drizzle the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil into a 9×13 -inch baking dish and use your hand to evenly coat the entire surface. Set aside.

Roll the mixture into round, golf bill-size meatballs (about 1 1/2 inches), making sure to pack the vegetable mixture firmly. Flace the balls in the prepared baking dish, allowing 1/4-inch of space between the balls and place them in even rows vertically and horizontally to form a grid.

Roast for 30 minutes, or until the meatballs are firm and cooked through.

Allow the meatballs to cool for 5 minutes in the baking dish before serving

Epicurious | December 2011 by Daniel Holzman & Michael Chernow The Meatball Shop Cookbook

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Mini Buffalo Chicken Balls



yield: Makes about forty 3/4 -inch meatballs

These balls with definitely get any party started.
Buffalo's finest bar food minutes the bones makes it the
perfect food to serve for the big game, a... <u>more</u> >

ingredients

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter 1/3 cup Frank's RedHot Sauce or any other favorite hot sauce 1 pound ground chicken, preferably thigh meat
- 1 large egg 1/2 celery stalk, minced 3/4 cup bread crumbs 1 teaspoon salt

preparation

Preheat the oven to $_{450}$ °F. Drizzle the vegetable oil into a $_{9\times13}$ -inch baking dish and use your hand to evenly coat the entire surface. Set aside.

Combine the butter and hot sauce in a small saucepan, and cook over low heat, whisking until the butter is melted and fully incorporated. Remove from the heat and allow the mixture to cool for 1 minutes.

 $Combine \ the \ hot sauce \ mixture, \ ground \ chicken, \ egg, \ celery, \ bread \ crumbs, \ and \ salt \ in \ a \ large \ mixing \ bowl \ and \ mix \ by \ hand \ until \ thoroughly \ incorporated.$

Roll the mixture into round, 3/4 -inch balls, making sure to pack the meat firmly. Place the balls in the prepared baking dish, being careful to line them up snugly and in even rows vertically and horizontally to form a grid. The meatballs should be touching one another.

Roast for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the meatballs are firm and cooked through. A meat thermometer inserted into the center of a meatball should read $165^\circ F$.

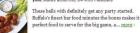
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ingredients subscribe to Bon Appétit

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