



JERNEJ KITCHEN

MEATBALLS IN TOMATO SAUCE (ČUFTI)

Meatballs in Tomato Sauce, or Čufti in Slovenian, is a recipe we grew up eating. This family favorite feeds the crowd, or we can freeze it for later.

SERVES	8	PEOPLE
PREPARATION:	15	MINUTES
COOK:	60	MINUTES
TOTAL TIME:	1	HOUR 15 MINUTES

MEATBALLS

- 100 g (2 thick slices) white bread, crust removed
- 160 ml (2/3 cup) hot milk
- 900 g (2 pounds) ground meat (beef or a mixture of beef and pork)
- 2 eggs
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried marjoram
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp olive oil, for frying

TOMATO SAUCE

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 1/2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 1/2 tbsp sugar
- 600 g (2 1/2 cups) tomato passata

MEATBALL MIXTURE

Cut the bread into small cubes and place in a small bowl. Pour the hot milk over the bread and set aside for 5 minutes for the bread to soak up the liquid. Add meatball ingredients (eggs, onion, parsley, thyme, marjoram, salt, and pepper) to a bowl and knead until combined. Add the bread and knead into a meatball mixture. Divide the mixture into 26 equal parts, then shape them into balls and place them on a baking sheet or plate.

FRY THE MEAT

Place a large skillet with olive oil over medium-high heat. Add half the meatballs and fry on each side for 2 - 3 minutes. Make sure there are enough meatballs between them while frying. Transfer the baked meatballs to a large plate and repeat the process with the rest.

MEATBALLS IN TOMATO SAUCE

Place a large pot on low heat. Add the olive oil, diced onion, and flour. Saute for 5 minutes over low heat. Add the minced garlic and sugar. Cook for 1 - 2 minutes, then add the tomato passata. Stir well to get a smooth sauce. Pour in the water, add the parsley basil, and season with salt and pepper. Increase the heat, bring to a boil, then lower the heat. Add the fried meatballs, cover with a lid, and cook for 45 - 60 minutes. Uncover for the last 15 minutes of cooking. The meatballs should be soft and juicy, and the sauce should be flavorful and thick.

SERVE

Serve the Meatballs in Tomato Sauce with [mashed potatoes](#). We usually serve three meatballs per person, or if we're really

750 ml (3 cups) water

2 sprigs of parsley

3 basil leaves

hungry, we serve four meatballs per person. Optionally freeze the rest of the meatballs with the sauce for later.

TOOLS AND EQUIPEMENT

kitchen knife

cutting board

bowl

large pan