



Mozzarella-filled meatballs with pasta salad

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

For the meatballs:

- 500g fresh ground beef
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- a handful of fresh thyme and oregano
- a handful of breadcrumbs*
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon ground pepperoncino
- 1 ball of fresh mozzarella di bufala (ca 150g), diced
- extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon
- water in over-proof glass**

For the salad:

- 150g fresh or dry fusilli
- Lamb's lettuce/songino
- Red chicory leaves /chioggia
- Cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- Extra virgin olive oil

*I crumble this from a 4-day-old corn-and-sunflower loaf

**I put this inside the oven while I broil/bake the meatballs to keep it moist and tender

Instructions

This makes about 8-10 meatballs.

For the salad:

- Boil the pasta according to instructions. After draining, keep the pasta in the sieve as you add a dash of olive oil and mayonnaise so the pasta is evenly coated in the mixture.
- Toss the pasta together with the tomatoes and salad leaves.
- Set aside until the meatballs are ready.

For the meatballs:

- In a bowl, and using your hands, mix well the ground beef, garlic, thyme, oregano, egg, breadcrumbs, pepperoncino, salt and pepper.
- Take a chunk of the meatball mixture and flatten it against one palm of the hand.
- Place one piece of the mozzarella and close the meatball.
- Do this for the rest of the mixture.
- Heat the oven to 180C.
- Put a frying pan over high fire and when the surface is hot, add olive oil.
- "Seal" the meatballs by browning it on all sides and put the browned meatballs in a Pyrex/oven-proof dish that has been brushed with olive oil.
- Bake the meatballs for 10 minutes on one side at 180C, then turn them over and bake for a further 10 minutes.
- Don't forget to put a glass of water in the oven while the meatballs are baking - this keeps moisture in the oven.
- When done, take the meatballs out and serve with pasta salad.
- Squeeze lemon on the meatballs and salad.
- Buon appetito!