



Spanish Style Chicken Gratinated Meatballs Braised in Homemade Tomato Sauce

Serves 4

Meatballs made with chicken make a delicious change and when cooked in a lightly spiced, homemade tomato sauce creates a true comfort dish that is both delicious and nutritious!

TASTE OF CATER CARE FACT

The chicken in this dish is an excellent source of protein, making it a great choice for all residents, especially those who have increased protein requirements. The addition of parmesan cheese not only adds texture and flavour, but is also a good source of calcium, which is an important nutrient for elderly adults in maintaining healthy bones.

Served with a delicious homemade tomato sauce, this dish can be enjoyed by those who require a texture modified diet, ensuring any crisp or crunchy pieces are removed.

INGREDIENTS

- As required - Extra Virgin Olive Oil Spray
- 200gm Red Onion - top, tail, peel, halve and finely dice.
- 1 Garlic Clove - peel and finely chop.
- 2 sprigs Thyme - pick leaves, rinse, drain and finely chop
- 800gm Crushed Tomato
- 200ml Chicken Stock (salt reduced)
- 300ml Water
- 20ml Balsamic Vinegar
- 10gm Caster Sugar
- 10 Basil Leaves - rinse, drain and finely shred.
- To Taste - Sea Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper
- 500gm Chicken Thigh Mince
- ½ Bunch Chives - rinse, drain and finely slice.
- 20 Flat Leaf Parsley Leaves - rinse, drain and finely chop.
- 10 Oregano Leaves - rinse, drain and finely chop.
- ½ tsp Smoked Paprika
- 15gm Seeded Mustard
- 150ml Tomato Sauce
- 40gm Fine Breadcrumbs
- 1 Egg - crack and beat.
- To Taste - Sea Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper
- As required - Extra Virgin Olive Oil Spray
- As required - Fine breadcrumbs
- As required - Parmesan Cheese - finely grate.
- 10 Flat Leaf Parsley Leaves - rinse, drain and roughly tear.

METHOD

1. Preheat an oven to a moderate temperature - 160°C.
2. Generously spray oil a saute pan and place over a moderate heat, add the onion and garlic, saute until the onion has softened.
3. Add the crushed tomato, chicken stock, water and balsamic vinegar, mix to combine. Bring the sauce up to the boil, then reduce the heat and allow to gently simmer for 20 minutes or until the sauce has thickened and lightly coats the back of a spoon. Add and mix through the sugar and basil, then season to taste. Remove the pan from the heat and pour the sauce into a deep sided roasting tray.



4. In a mixing bowl, add the chicken mince, chives, parsley (first quantity), oregano, paprika, mustard, tomato sauce, breadcrumbs (first quantity) and egg, mix to thoroughly combine, season to taste and then shape the mixture into 12 evenly sized meatballs.
 5. Lightly spray oil a saute pan and place over a moderate heat, add the meatballs and saute until they are well browned on all sides. Remove the pan from the heat and place the meatballs in a single layer on top of the tomato sauce in the roasting tray.
 6. Lightly sprinkle each meatball with a little breadcrumbs (second quantity) and parmesan cheese. Place the tray into the oven and bake the meatballs for 20 minutes or until they are cooked through and the parmesan cheese has melted and is a light golden brown, then carefully (it's hot) remove the tray from the oven. Scatter the torn parsley over the meatballs before serving.
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