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Meatballs with Salad Green Pesto and Spaghetti Squash

Ingredients

- 1 spaghetti squash (can be older and soft)

Pesto:

- 1-1 ½ bunches kale, whole stalk including stem
- 1 cup (250 mL) onions, sliced
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) garlic, chopped
- 3 tablespoons (45 mL) lemon juice
- olive oil

Meatballs:

- 1 pound (1/2 kg) ground beef
- Up to 1 cup (250 mL) onions, minced
- Olives, chopped
- 1 cup (250 mL) bread crumbs, from leftover crackers or matzo

Directions

Pesto sauce: Cut off stalk end of kale and blanch the whole stalk (leaves + stems) by dipping them in boiling salted water. Blanching softens the stems of the kale.

Place leaves into a food processor or blender. Add sliced onions, garlic and lemon juice. Place lid on food processor and blend.

When the leaves form a paste at the bottom, begin adding the olive oil while the food processor is running. Add olive oil until the desired consistency is reached - should be like a sauce.

Spaghetti base: Select cooking method. Follow squash prep and cooking instructions accordingly.

Air fryer and Oven: Cut spaghetti squash in half, length wise, and scrape out the seeds.

Sprinkle a tablespoon of olive oil over each open side of spaghetti squash. Sprinkle salt and pepper over each open side to taste.

Cook the squash in an air fryer for 20 minutes at 380°F (195°C) until fork tender. For oven, bake at 400°F (205°C) for 10 minutes with flesh side facing down.

Microwave: Put whole squash in microwave and cook on high in 2 minute-increments until it is soft enough to cut through easily. Cut squash in half and scrape out seeds. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.



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- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) ketchup
- 1 egg
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- Worcestershire sauce, to taste
- Meat thermometer

All cooking methods: After cooking, let squash sit and cool until it is comfortable to work with. Use a fork to scrape out the inside of the squash into strands. Set strands aside.

Meatballs: Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).

Mix onions and olives in a large bowl.

Break up ground beef and add to onions and olives.

If using fully thawed ground beef add a little water.

If using beef that has not fully thawed, do not add water.

Add breadcrumbs, garlic, ketchup, egg, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce.

Mix all ingredients together and form into meatballs - about 3 tablespoons (45 mL) of mixture per meatball.

Heat oil in cast iron skillet or oven-safe skillet and add meatballs to skillet. Brown all sides of meatballs.

When all sides are browned, place skillet in the oven for 10-15 minutes until the internal temperature of the meatballs reach 165°F (75°C) on a meat thermometer.

Plating: Mound spaghetti squash strands on a plate to form a “nest” for the meatballs. Place two meatballs in the nest. Place a scoop of pesto on top of each meatball. Add parmesan cheese to taste.

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReBPZGZfao8>



Recipe courtesy of NJ Department of Environmental Protection, *Food Recovery Cooking Challenge Finalists. September 16, 2021.*



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