

ITALIAN-ISH MEATBALL SUBS

FEEDS: 4–6 PREP: 45 minutes COOK: 1½ hours

Meatball subs are not really a big thing in South Africa, and I can't figure out why. They are so good and honestly, I think we're missing out. Try one, and you'll see what I mean.

THE MEATBALLS

Olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
A small knob of fresh ginger, chopped
1 red chilli, chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
A small handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
A small handful of fresh sage, chopped
2 slices of white bread, crusts removed, and cut into small pieces

¼ C milk
2 eggs
½ C grated parmesan
¼ C ricotta
500 g pork mince
500 g fatty beef mince
2 tsp salt
Olive oil

THE SAUCE

3 × 400 g cans good-quality Italian whole peeled tomatoes
1 can of water
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tsp sugar
2 tsp dried oregano

A handful of fresh basil, torn
A knob of butter
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

THE BREAD & CHEESE

A French loaf, sliced lengthwise and buttered
Mozzarella, grated
Red onions, sliced
Fresh basil, chopped
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Set a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Heat a glug of olive oil, then fry the onion until it starts to brown. Toss in the garlic, ginger and chilli, and fry for another 2–3 minutes, until fragrant. Season with salt and pepper, then mix in the chopped parsley and sage. Remove the pan from the heat. Scoop the mixture out onto a plate and pop it in the fridge to cool down quickly.

To a large mixing bowl, add the bread and milk, and mix to combine. Let it stand for 2 minutes, then give it a good squish with your hand to mash it into a bread pulp. Add the cooled onion mixture, eggs, parmesan, ricotta, pork and beef mince, 2 teaspoons of salt and pepper to taste. Gently work the mixture to distribute the ingredients evenly, but do not overwork. The longer you work it, the tougher the meatballs will be.

Preheat the oven to 230 °C.

Divide the mixture into 60 g portions and roll them into balls. Place the meatballs on a baking tray and brush them with olive oil. Bake in the oven for 15–18 minutes.

Mix all the ingredients for the sauce together in a large pot. Set it over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Pop the meatballs in the sauce and let it simmer on low for 20–30 minutes, until the sauce thickens but is still saucy.

Set the grill on high and give the loaf halves a light toast. Remove them from the oven, spread cheese over both halves and return to the oven to melt. Once melted and bubbly, remove the bread from the oven and pack it with warm meatballs and sauce. Sprinkle over the red onion slices and the basil. Season, then close and slice.

