

Savory Mountain Beef Meatballs

By Greg Atkinson, www.westcoastcooking.com

These meatballs are tender but they hold together well and they're easy to make. They are browned in the oven then finished on the stovetop in a pot of beef broth. The meatballs may be made and browned ahead, then held in the freezer to be simmered in the beef broth, or a pot of tomato sauce later. We like to serve them in the brown gravy-like sauce that forms around them with a big bowl of buttered noodles and a jar of cranberry sauce or tart cherry preserves on the side.

(Makes 32 bite-sized meatballs)

3 tablespoons olive oil for the baking sheet
1 pound ground Mountain Beef
1 medium onion (about 1/2 pound), peeled and roughly chopped
1 egg
1 cup panko, or other white breadcrumbs
1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
1 cup flour
4 cups beef broth
1 bay leaf

- 1.) Preheat the oven to 375 and oil a baking sheet with 1/2-inch sides. Put the ground beef in a large mixing bowl.
- 2.) Put the onion in the food processor and process, pulsing the motor on and off until the onion is virtually puréed. Add the egg, breadcrumbs, parsley, salt, pepper, and nutmeg and pulse the motor on and off a few times to incorporate all the ingredients.
- 3.) Transfer the mixture from the food processor into the mixing bowl with the ground beef and pork and with a wooden spoon or clean hands, work the mixture until all the ingredients are thoroughly combined.
- 4.) Divide the mixture into four equal parts and divide each of those pieces into 8 meatballs. All the meatballs should be the same size. If the mixture becomes sticky, dip your hands in cold water. Roll each ball in flour, shake off the excess and arrange the meatballs about 1/2 inch apart on the oiled baking sheet. Bake for 50 minutes and if you are not using bacon, brush on the ketchup. Bake until the meatballs are browned, about 20 minutes.
- 5.) In a large, heavy soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, bring the beef broth and the bay leaf to a boil. Transfer the browned meatballs to the boiling broth and simmer, uncovered until the broth is reduced to half its original volume and the meatballs are very tender, about 45 minutes.