

Chicken Meatballs with Escarole and Rigatoni

Adapted from Gourmet by Sweet By Nurture

Makes 2 dozen meatballs, half for this pasta recipe (2-3 servings) the other 12 for another dish—see above.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil
¾ cup finely diced yellow onion
3 oz. pancetta, finely diced
3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 lb ground chicken
1 cup panko breadcrumbs
¼ cup milk
1 egg, beaten
3 tablespoons of flat-leafed parsley finely chopped
2 tablespoons of tomato paste
½ pound of rigatoni or any other tubular pasta
½ head of escarole, washed and chopped but not dried
Parmigiano Reggiano to grate over the pasta

Directions:

Preheat oven 400°

To make the meatballs, put the olive oil, onion, 2 cloves of garlic, and pancetta in a sauté pan over medium low heat and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally until the onions soften. Take the pan off the heat and let cool slightly. Don't wash the pan—you will use it later for the escarole.

In a large mixing bowl add the chicken, breadcrumbs, egg, parsley, milk and combine. Add the slightly cooled onion mixture into the bowl and toss to combine evenly. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and roll the meatballs into small balls about the size of walnuts. Mix the tomato paste with a tablespoon of water and brush the mixture on top of the meatballs. Bake in a preheated oven for 18 minutes.

While the meatballs are cooking, fill a large pot with 3 quarts of water and bring to a boil, add pasta. Cook according to package, about 11 minutes till *al dente*.

While the pasta is cooking, toss the remaining clove of minced garlic into the sauté pan over medium heat. Stir for 20 seconds then toss in the escarole and using tongs, turn the wet leaves to cover them with garlic. Shake the pan and when the escarole starts to wilt, turn off heat.

When the pasta is cooked, drain and turn into a big bowl. Add the escarole, and about 12 meatballs. Dust with parmigiana and serve.