

Venison Spaghetti and Meatballs

There are a lot of amazing spaghetti recipes out there. Everyone's mother or grandmother made the best. This is one I worked up for use with venison as it is a bit lighter and less tomatoey than most American versions and pairs well with the leaner meat. I have found it to be my favorites when I have the time to do it right. I hope you all like it. Paired with a cabernet sauvignon and some garlic bread, it is hard to resist. DT

Ingredients:

Meatballs:

1 lb	Ground venison
8 oz	Venison Sausage (Pork if you must)
1/2 cup	Freshly grated parmesan, plus more for garnish
1/4 cup	Fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped
1/3 cup	Fresh Breadcrumbs (made from stale bread)
1/3 cup	Chicken Stock
1 ½ tsp	Salt
½ tsp	Cayenne Pepper
2	Large Eggs
2	Cloves Garlic, finely chopped
1/2	Medium Walla Walla sweet onion, finely chopped
3 tbsp	Extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for forming meatballs

Sauce:

2 tbsp	Extra-virgin Olive Oil
2	Celery Ribs, chopped fine
2	Medium Walla Walla Sweet Onions, chopped fine
1	Large Carrot, chopped fine
3	Cloves garlic, chopped
2	Bay Leaves
1 tbsp	Tomato paste
1	28-oz can Chopped Tomatoes
3 qts	Chicken Stock
2-3	Sprigs fresh thyme, tied together with cotton string
½ Cup	Fresh basil leaves, chopped

1 lb	Fresh Spaghetti
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Directions:

Meatballs:

- In a large bowl, using your hands mix the venison, sausage, Parmesan, parsley, breadcrumbs, stock, salt, cayenne, eggs, garlic and onions until evenly combined. Do not overwork the mixture or the meatballs will be

tough. Oil your hands and form mixture loosely into golf ball size meatballs. You should have about two dozen.

- Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Gently add the meatballs and brown thoroughly on all sides; this will take about 15 minutes. Set aside on plate and refrigerate while cooking sauce.

Sauce:

- In the same Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the celery, onions, and carrots. Cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 8 minutes. Add garlic and bay leaves and cook until fragrant, about a minute. Push the veggies to one side of pan and add the tomato paste, toasting it on the bottom of the pan for 1 minute. Stir into the vegetables.
- Add the tomatoes, chicken stock and thyme. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer gently, partially covered, until thick and reduced by half, about an hour.
- Carefully add the meatballs, a few at a time. Simmer, stirring very gently, about 40 minutes. Remove and discard the bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Add most of the basil and stir, reserving a little to sprinkle over the top for serving.
- Meanwhile, cook the fresh spaghetti in a pot of salted (like sea water) boiling water until al dente, about 2-3 minutes.

To Serve:

- Place pasta into a large serving bowl. Ladle sauce over pasta and then the meatballs. Garnish with chopped fresh basil and freshly grated Parmesan. Serve with some garlic bread and a fresh spinach salad.