

## No mess meatballs

Some recipes fry meatballs for extra flavor and firm texture. In my opinion, this isn't necessary. You can retain *plenty* of flavor and texture by baking them at a high temperature. The best part—there's no mess!

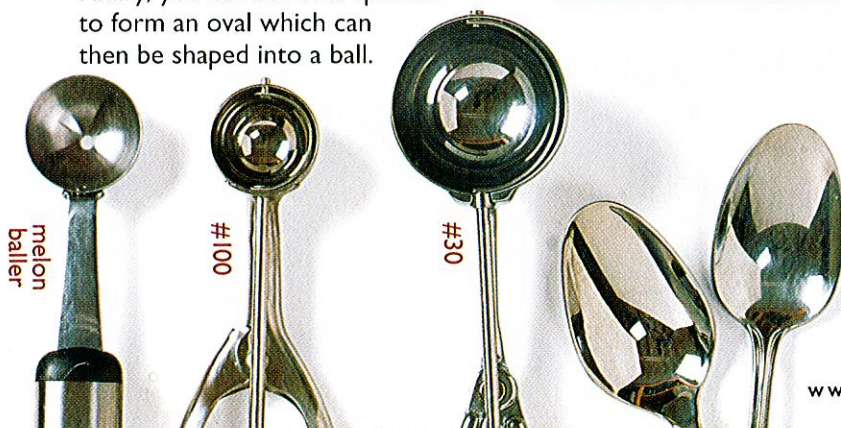
**Mixing:** Mixing meatballs is a two step process. Before adding the meat, blend other ingredients thoroughly then add the meat and mix with a fork, *see Figure 1*. Using a fork prevents overmixing and compacting which can toughen meatballs.

**Shaping:** The best way to shape meatballs is to use a disher, *below*. Scoop out the meat mixture (with the disher) onto a baking sheet, and then roll the scoops into balls, *see Figure 2*. To prevent sticking, dip your hands in water.

**Cooking:** Once all the meatballs are rolled and placed on the baking sheet, pour beef broth to cover the bottom of the pan, *see Figure 3*. This keeps the meatballs juicy. Be sure to save the drippings after baking—you'll want to put this into your tomato sauce for knockout flavor.

### Easier Ways to Scoop

You might want to consider utilizing one of the tools below for making meatballs a consistent size. The first is simply a large melon baller—it works just fine, but meat tends to stick in its bowl. The next two scoops are different sized "portioning scoops," or dishers. These work best as they have retracting blades that release the meat or other foods (like cookie dough). Finally, you can use two spoons to form an oval which can then be shaped into a ball.



## BASIC MEATBALLS

You can cook these meatballs ahead and then freeze by placing them on a baking sheet. When hard, remove and store in a freezer bag.

MAKES 30–33 (1½ oz.) MEATBALLS; TOTAL TIME: 50 MINUTES

### STIR TOGETHER:

- 1 cup unseasoned bread crumbs
- ¾ cup Romano or Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- ½ cup whole milk
- ½ cup low-sodium beef broth
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 T. dried oregano
- 1 T. garlic, minced
- 1 T. kosher salt
- 1 T. ground black pepper
- 2 t. dried basil
- 1 t. crushed red pepper flakes
- Pinch nutmeg

### ADD; SHAPE:

- 2 lb. ground chuck

### COVER BOTTOM OF PAN WITH:

- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth

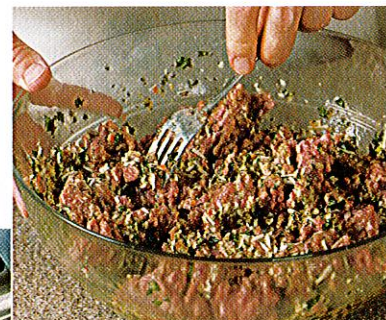
Preheat oven to 450°.

**Stir together** all ingredients (except the ground meat) in a large mixing bowl.

**Add** the ground chuck and mix together thoroughly. Using a portioning scoop or 2 spoons, shape the meat mixture into balls (about 2" in diameter or 1½ oz. each). Coat a baking sheet or shallow roasting pan with nonstick cooking spray. Space the meatballs on the pan so they're not touching or crowded together.

**Cover** bottom of pan with beef broth. Bake for 25 minutes, or until the meatballs are just cooked through. Reserve pan juices for sauce.

1 Combine the ground chuck with the bread crumb mixture. Stir thoroughly with a fork.



2 Scoop out meat to form golf ball-sized portions. Roll and place on pan so they're not touching.



3 Cover the bottom of the pan with beef broth. Bake about 25 minutes.