

# Upfront

It's chilly as write this. My office doesn't want to warm up. Comfort food – especially when it's flavored by family traditions – warms both body and soul.

We're smack in the middle of holiday season; so, in this issue, The Skinnie offers a small collection of favorite recipes from our family kitchens. You'll find them on page .

If you're a regular reader, you know cooking is my thing. My Instagram handle is @SmellsLikeSunday, a nod to the sensory and spiritual joy that comes from slow-simmering sauce and serving it to the people you love. Follow me for videos and photos and recipes from my kitchen, and moments from my broader world.

For me, there's nothing more fortifying – in every way - than rigatoni and meatballs. My recipe and its attendant sauce has evolved over many years to its current version, which finally feels like its fully-actualized self. I hope it makes you as happy as it does me.

## A DOZEN MEATBALLS IN RED SAUCE

1 lb ground beef (80/20)  
1 lb ground pork  
1 c yellow onion, diced  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1 c grated pecorino cheese  
2 eggs  
2 c day-old rustic Italian bread, torn into small pieces (crust included)  
1 ½ c whole milk  
4 tbsp olive oil plus ½ c  
1/4 c Italian parsley, chopped  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat 4 tbsp olive oil in a small saute pan over medium-high. Add onions, season with salt, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring to prevent excessive browning. Add garlic, stir well, and cook for another minute. Remove from heat and transfer to a large mixing bowl.

In a small bowl, combine the bread and milk and allow the bread to absorb the liquid.

When onions and garlic have cooled, add beef and pork to the large mixing bowl and season liberally with salt and pepper. Mix lightly by hand to combine the meats well.

Squeeze excess milk from the bread. Add soaked bread, cheese, egg, and parsley to the bowl with the meat. Mix well - but gently - by hand until everything is well combined.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or aluminum foil. Roll



meat mixture into balls, slightly smaller than baseballs but bigger (significantly) than golf balls. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm them.

Preheat oven to 375.

Remove meatballs from refrigerator.

Heat ½ c olive oil in a Dutch oven or heavy, high-sided pan (at least 8 inches high). Carefully brown meatballs, in batches if necessary, on all sides (taking care not to break when turning). Remove to the lined baking sheet.

Place baking sheet with browned meatballs in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Remove sheet from oven and allow meatballs to rest and cool before adding to a pot of red sauce (recipe to follow) to finish the cooking process.

### Marinara Sauce

2 28-oz cans whole peeled San Marzano tomatoes  
1 c chopped yellow onion  
8 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
¼ c extra virgin olive oil  
½ tsp red pepper flakes  
Handful fresh oregano, leaves chopped (or a heaping tsp dried)

In a large Dutch oven or high-sided pan, heat olive oil over medium-high and reduce to medium before it reaches its smoking point. Add onions, salt liberally, stir, and saute for 5 minutes. Add garlic, red pepper, and oregano, and cook for a minute or 2. Add tomatoes, salt very liberally (don't be afraid), stir well to incorporate all ingredients, increase heat to high, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook gently for 30 minutes to an hour. Check occasionally and stir to prevent sauce from scorching. Uncover and simmer for 15 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add meatballs and coat with sauce. Simmer for another half hour, or until your heart's content.

*Scott A. Lauricelli*

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