

Ultimate Bourbon BBQ Bacon Cheeseburger Meatball Subs: A Flavor Explosion

Bourbon BBQ Bacon Cheeseburger Meatball Subs: The Ultimate Comfort Food



OVEN
400°F

TIME
2 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb Ground Beef: 80/20 blend is best for flavor and juiciness.
 - 1/2 lb Ground Pork: Adds fat and a tender texture.
 - 1/2 cup Breadcrumbs: To bind everything together.
 - 1/4 cup Milk: For soaking the breadcrumbs (the secret to soft meatballs).
 - 1 Egg: The glue that keeps the meatballs round.
 - 1/2 cup Cheddar Cheese: Shredded, to go right inside the meat.
 - 1/2 Small Onion & 2 Cloves Garlic: Finely chopped and minced for aromatic depth.
 - 1 tbsp Worcestershire Sauce: For that "umami" punch.
 - 1 tsp Smoked Paprika: To enhance the BBQ smokiness.
 - Salt & Black Pepper: To taste.
 - 6 Slices Thick-Cut Bacon: Cooked until crispy and chopped.
 - 1 cup Bourbon BBQ Sauce: Use your favorite brand or a homemade version.
 - 4 Sub Rolls: Split and ready for toasting.
 - 1 1/2 cups Extra Shredded Cheese: Cheddar or American work beautifully for the topping.
 - 2 tbsp Butter: For that golden, toasted bun.
- Swaps and Notes:
- The Meat: If you want a leaner option, you can use ground turkey, but I recommend adding a splash of olive oil to prevent them from drying out.

The Bourbon: If you prefer to keep it alcohol-free, a "Hickory Brown Sugar" BBQ sauce offers a similar depth of flavor.

The Cheese: While I love sharp cheddar, Pepper Jack is a fantastic swap if you want a little bit of a spicy kick.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Prep the Oven: Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper for easy cleanup.

Soak the Crumbs: In a large mixing bowl, combine the breadcrumbs and milk. Let them sit for about 2 minutes. This creates a "panade" that keeps the meat from getting tough.

Mix the Base: Stir the egg, onion, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, salt, and pepper into the breadcrumb mixture.

Incorporate the Meat: Add the ground beef, ground pork, shredded cheddar, and half of your chopped bacon. Mix gently with your hands-do not overmix, or your meatballs will become dense and rubbery.

Bake: Form the mixture into 1 1/2-inch meatballs (you should get about 12-16) and place them on the baking sheet. Bake for 18-20 minutes until fully cooked.

Glaze: While the meatballs bake, warm your bourbon BBQ sauce in a saucepan. Once the meatballs are out of the oven, toss them in the warm sauce until they are glistening and fully coated.

Toast the Rolls: Spread butter on the split sub rolls and toast them in the oven or on a griddle until golden brown.

Assemble and Melt: Place 3-4 saucy meatballs into each roll. Spoon over a little extra sauce, top with the remaining bacon and plenty of cheese. Place under the broiler for 1-2 minutes until the cheese is bubbling and melted.

Garnish: Add your favorite toppings like pickles, jalapeños, or crispy fried onions.

Tips for Success:

Size Matters: Try to keep the meatballs uniform in size so they all finish cooking at the same time.

Don't Skimp on the Toast: Toasting the bun creates a barrier so the BBQ sauce doesn't make the bread soggy immediately.

Broiler Watch: When melting the cheese at the end, stay by the oven! The transition from "perfectly melted" to "burnt" happens in seconds.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (Per Serving):

DIRECTIONS

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13. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** These subs are heavy hitters, so they pair best with sides that have a bit of a crunch or a tangy bite. I love serving these with a side of slaw or even as part of a larger spread featuring this Baked Kosher Salami.
14. **If you are feeding a larger group and want to offer a variety of "build-your-own" options, consider setting these out alongside a Walking Taco Bar. And of course, no BBQ-themed meal is complete without a great dip. I highly recommend my Beer Cheese Dip for dipping the ends of your sub rolls!**
15. **Nutritional Information (Per Serving):** Calories: 680 kcal
16. **Fat:** 38g
17. **Carbohydrates:** 45g
18. **Protein:** 36g
19. **Sodium:** 1150mg
20. **Storage and Leftover Tips: Fridge:** Store leftover meatballs and sauce in an airtight container for up to 3 days. Store the rolls separately to prevent sogginess.
21. **Reheating:** Reheat the meatballs in a small saucepan over medium-low heat or in the microwave. Re-toast a fresh bun for the best experience.
22. **Freezer:** You can freeze the cooked meatballs (without the rolls) for up to 2 months. Just thaw overnight in the fridge before reheating.
23. **More Recipes You Will Love:** Easy Cheesy Chicken Sliders
24. **Crockpot :** Nacho Dip
25. **Walking :** Taco Bar

SWAPS & NOTES

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/ultimate-bourbon-bbq-bacon-cheeseburger-meatball-subs-a-flavor-explosion/>