

Beef Rice Meatballs with Tomato Gravy

Tender ground beef meatballs with cooked rice, Parmesan, and parsley, simmered in tomato gravy and served over hot rice.



PREP

20 minutes

COOK

40 minutes

TOTAL

1 hour 4 servings (about 24 to 28 meatballs)

SERVES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 cup fully cooked rice, cooled, for the meatball mixture
- 1/2 cup plain dry breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon salt, using less if other ingredients are salted
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, plus a little more only if needed for browning
- 1 can (15 ounces) plain tomato sauce
- 1 can (about 14.5 to 15 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1/2 cup water, plus a splash more if the sauce reduces too much
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 2 cups hot cooked rice, for serving

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix the meatballs: Combine the cooled cooked rice, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, parsley, egg, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Add the ground beef and fold together gently just until evenly combined. Do not taste the raw mixture.
2. Shape evenly: Roll into about 24 to 28 meatballs, roughly 1 1/2 inches across, using about 2 tablespoons mixture per ball and adjusting to the actual yield. Keep them similar in size and place on a tray. If the mixture is very soft, refrigerate for about 10 minutes before shaping.
3. Brown in batches: Heat the olive oil in a large deep skillet over medium heat. Add meatballs in a single layer without crowding. Brown for about 5 to 7 minutes per batch, turning gently so several sides color. They do not need to be fully cooked yet. Transfer to a clean plate and repeat as needed, adding a little oil if the pan becomes dry.
4. Build the tomato gravy: Carefully spoon off excess fat, leaving the browned pan drippings. Add the tomato sauce, undrained diced tomatoes, water, and Italian seasoning. Stir to loosen the browned bits and bring to a gentle simmer.
5. Simmer until cooked through: Return the meatballs and their plate juices to the skillet. Spoon sauce over the tops, cover, and simmer gently for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until the largest meatballs reach 160 degrees F in the center on a food thermometer. Turn or shake the pan gently once or twice rather than stirring vigorously. Add a splash of water if the gravy becomes too thick. If it is thin when the meatballs are done, lift them out and simmer the sauce uncovered briefly.

6. Serve over rice: Taste the finished gravy and adjust seasoning. Divide the 2 cups hot serving rice among 4 bowls, then add meatballs and plenty of tomato gravy. Add a little extra parsley or Parmesan if desired.

SWAPS & NOTES

Use cooked rice in the meatballs, not dry rice. The recipe uses 3 cups cooked rice in total: 1 cup in the mixture and 2 cups for serving.

Timing is approximate and assumes the rice for the mixture is already cooked. Optional chilling, rice cooking, and extra browning batches can add time.

Meatball yield depends on size. This version uses roughly 1 1/2-inch balls rather than the original very small 1-inch size.

Browned outsides do not indicate cooked centers. Simmer until the

largest meatballs reach 160 degrees F; use 165 degrees F if substituting ground poultry.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use cooled rice and mix gently so the beef does not become dense.

Shape similar-sized balls for even cooking.

Brown in batches rather than crowding the skillet.

Keep the sauce at a gentle simmer so the meatballs hold together.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/beef-rice-meatballs-with-tomato-gravy/>