

Balls! All

Mix things up and experiment with different meats when making meatballs.

When I was just a wee lad, I was introduced to mince meat when my mother's new Sunbeam pressure cooker exploded. The gruel that was meant to be mince and veggies had to be scraped off the ceiling.

"Stand back" Mum would say as she put her weight on the top of the hissing cooker. "It's designed to cook food in half the time it normally takes". I thought my mum was a genius. Little did I know that she simply hadn't grasped the intricacies of her new machine.

As an adult I have discovered that there

are so many things you can do with a bit of minced meat, most of which don't involve serving dinner off the roof. But you can't always rely on your butcher (or my mum) to help you make what you want — so if there is no butcher in sight and you need some mince all you need is a sharp knife, a flat board, a bit of patience and a good drink.

Look in the freezer and if, for example, you've got a couple of chicken thighs — rip them out, defrost them and then the therapy starts.

The first thing is to strip them of all fat and then chop, chop, chop. Have a breather, take a sip of chardy and keep going till you

have reduced the meat to a blithering mess. It won't take long, trust me.

The meat requires the same treatment whether it is beef, chicken or lamb. It's about what is in your freezer at the time. Whatever you do, experiment with your taste buds — they'll tell you what's right.

So, on that note have a go at these gems when you next get a chance.

Of course, if you can't be bothered making your own mince and you're near a butcher that has the raw ingredients — good. But have a go, make your own mince, it's not as hard as it seems. ■

MOROCCAN MEATBALLS

Serves four

- 500g beef mince
- ½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
- 2T chopped fresh coriander
- 1t ground cumin
- 1t ground sweet paprika
- 1t ground coriander
- 1T olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 400g can of diced tomatoes
- ¼ cup water
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1t honey
- Steamed rice or cous cous to serve

Method

Combine mince, breadcrumbs, fresh coriander, cumin, paprika and ground coriander in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Roll the mixture into balls about walnut size. Place balls in fridge for 30 minutes before cooking.

Using half of the olive oil and a large high sided frying pan cook the meatballs in batches for 2-3 minutes or until browned. Set aside.

Add the remaining olive oil to the pan and cook the onion until it is soft. Add the crushed garlic and cook for a further minute or so. Add tinned tomatoes, water, cinnamon stick and honey and bring to the boil.

Return the meatballs to the pan with the sauce, drop the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes or until the meatballs are cooked through.

Serve with steamed rice or cous cous.



ASIAN NOODLE SOUP WITH THAI CHICKEN MEATBALLS

Serves four

Meatballs

- 800g chicken mince
- 2 cloves garlic crushed
- ½ cup coriander, roughly chopped
- 3T crunchy peanut butter
- 2T sweet chilli sauce
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs
- 2T soy sauce

Asian Noodle Soup

- 3-4L chicken stock
- Dry rice noodles
- 1 carrot, finely sliced
- 4 spring onions, sliced diagonally
- 1 small broccoli head, separate florets and finely slice the stalk
- 4 mushrooms, sliced finely
- 1t crushed garlic
- 1t crushed ginger
- 2T soy sauce
- 2T sweet chilli sauce
- 1t sesame oil



Method

Combine all meatball ingredients in a large bowl and roll into walnut sized balls. Set aside in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Place the stock, garlic and ginger in a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Once boiling, reduce to a simmer and pop in your meatballs. Allow to cook for about 15 minutes.

Add your noodles, sliced carrot and

sliced broccoli stalks. Cook for another 2-3 minutes. Add sliced mushrooms and broccoli florets. Cook for another few minutes.

Add spring onions, soy sauce, sweet chilli sauce and sesame oil.

Serve in warmed bowls with a spoon and either chopsticks or a fork.

Feel free to substitute vegetable ingredients seasonally or to taste.

SPAGHETTI WITH CHEESY MEATBALLS

Serves four

- 250g lean beef mince
- 250g pork mince
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 cup tasty cheese, grated
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup basil, chopped
- Salt and pepper for seasoning
- 1T olive oil
- 570g jar tomato, onion and basil chunky sauce
- 400g dried spaghetti
- Basil leaves to serve

Method

Combine the mince, egg, cheese, onion and basil. Season with salt and pepper and roll into balls. Place in the fridge for 30 minutes before cooking.

Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Cook half the meatballs for 4-5 minutes. Remove and repeat.

Return the meatballs to the pan and pour over sauce. Cover, cook over a medium heat for 20 minutes until cooked through.

Cook spaghetti in a large pan of salted, boiling water, as per packet directions. Drain and place in bowl. Spoon over meatballs and sauce.

Garnish with basil leaves.

