



Roasted Pork Meatballs

Serves 4 as a main dish, 6 as an appetizer

Form the meatballs ahead of time and pop them in the oven at the last minute for an easy party appetizer.

- 1 1/2 pounds ground pork
- 8 green onions, white and green parts, minced
- 7 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 stalks lemongrass, bottom 4 inches only, peeled and minced, or substitute the grated zest of 2 lemons
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons asian fish sauce
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch (optional)
- Nuoc cham (page 27) or spicy Mango sauce (page 32), or gluten-free hoisin sauce, for serving

In a large bowl, combine the pork, green onions, garlic, lemongrass, cilantro, sugar, fish sauce, and salt. Stir to combine the ingredients. Refrigerate, covered, so the flavors have a chance to marry, at least 3 hours and up to 24 hours. More time equals more flavor.

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Oil a baking sheet. Stir the optional cornstarch into the meat mixture. Form the meat into twenty-four 1 1/2-inch meatballs. (You can form the meatballs several hours ahead of time. Keep them refrigerated until ready to cook.) Transfer the meatballs to the prepared baking sheet. Cook the meatballs until browned and cooked through, turning once with a spatula, 12 to 15 minutes.

For serving, skewer the meatballs with toothpicks and arrange them on a serving platter with the *nuoc cham*, mango sauce, or hoisin sauce for dipping. Alternatively, using lettuce leaves as wrappers, spread a bit of hoisin sauce on each lettuce leaf and add a meatball and a few cilantro leaves.

v a r i a t i o n For a juicy, coarse-textured meatball, substitute pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes, for the ground pork. Toss the cubes with the ingredients in the first step and then freeze the mixture for 20 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a food processor and pulse until the pork is coarsely chopped, about twenty (1-second) pulses. Proceed with the recipe, including the marinating time.

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