

**SOUTZOUKAKIA
SMYRNEYKA –
MEATBALLS FROM
SMYRNA**



Yields:

4-6 servings

Prep. Time:

0 hours 15 minutes

Cook Time:

0 hours 40 minutes

Total Time:

0 hours 55 minutes



Up to 2 months



Not suitable for babies and children as it includes red wine.



Not suitable for vegans

Not suitable for vegetarians

This is a dish my mother would cook for us, which originated in Smyrna. I've always loved it. Basically, they're oval-shaped meatballs in red sauce. What differentiates these meatballs from regular meatballs, is their shape – oval as opposed to round – and the addition of cumin. They are perfect served with rice, fries, mashed potatoes and pasta, and you can add a few ingredients for a small twist, such as black olives and parsley, if you feel a little adventurous. It's a hearty warming dish which heralds the beginning of winter for me. There isn't a lot of chopping, so it's also surprisingly quick to make – best possible combo!

INGREDIENTS

- 500g ground beef, your choice of cut
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 3 slices of bread, edges cut off
- 6 Tbsp red wine
- 4 Tbsp warm water
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tsp salt
- 1-2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 500g Passata
- About 500ml water
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp salt

- 1 pinch sugar
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup red wine + a little extra for forming the meatballs

METHOD

1. In a bowl, mix the minced meat, lightly-beaten egg, crushed garlic, cumin, salt & pepper.
2. In another bowl, place the slices of bread and soak them in 6 Tbsp red wine and 4 Tbsp warm water. When the bread has soaked up all of the liquid, squeeze it lightly between your hands to remove excess liquid, and add to the bowl with the minced meat.
3. Blend all the ingredients until they come together, but don't overmix, as you don't want your meatballs to be hard. (If you want, at this point, you can also add a small handful of finely chopped parsley, but that's optional and not in the original recipe.)
4. Pour a little red wine in a small bowl. Form small oval-shaped meatballs, and gently dip them in the wine. Pat them into shape and place on a plate. Depending on how small or large you like your meatballs, you will have anywhere from 12 large ones or 24 small ones. The choice is yours!
5. Once all the meat mixture has been formed into meatballs, warm the olive oil in a wide heavy saucepan.
6. To know when the oil is heated enough, add in one meatball. If small bubbles appear and you can hear the oil sizzling, then add in the rest of the meatballs.
7. Brown them on all sides. This doesn't take long, about 2 minutes on each side.
8. Once browned, remove from the pot and let the meatballs rest whilst you prepare your sauce.
9. Making sure to scrape the bottom of the pan to remove all those delicious bits left from the meatballs, add the tomato paste and passata, and stir.
10. Add the red wine and about half of the water, and stir until it starts to thicken a little. If needed, add more of the water. You don't want the sauce to be too thick at this point, as it will reduce more with the meatballs inside.

11. Once the sauce is boiling, add the salt and pinch of sugar, and then place the meatballs (and all their juices) back into the pot.
12. Lower the heat, cover the pot slightly, and cook for another 20 or so minutes, until the sauce has reduced by half and coats a wooden spoon.
13. If you want, you can add some black olives to the sauce.
14. Serve with rice, pasta, fries or mashed potatoes.
15. To freeze, allow the sauce and meatballs to cool down completely, then place in airtight freezer bags, write the date on top, and place in the freezer.