



Italian Wedding Soup

Packed with onions and carrots, spinach and pasta AND meatballs, this hearty soup is perfect for chilly winter nights. Serve a big bowl of wedding soup with crusty rolls for a satisfying meal.

Meatballs

- 2 hamburger rolls or 4 slices white bread
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef or meatloaf mix
- 1 medium onion, grated or very finely diced
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan or Asiago cheese
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley

Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium onions, diced; about 2 cups
- 2 cups finely diced carrots, about 3 large carrots
- 2 large garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 4 to 4 1/2 quarts (16 to 18 cups) chicken broth, homemade or purchased
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried Italian herbs or 3/4 teaspoon each dried oregano and dried basil
- 10-ounce box frozen chopped spinach
- 1 teaspoon salt, to taste
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 2/3 cups uncooked orzo, ditalini, or other small, roundish pasta

Directions

1. To make the meatballs, combine the bread, egg, milk, and salt, stirring till everything is well moistened. Allow to sit for about 10 minutes to soften.
2. Add the ground meat, onion, cheese, and herbs. Mix gently till thoroughly combined.
3. Shape tiny meatballs, (about 1" diameter or less). Using a level teaspoon scoop (which volume-wise is actually 2 level measuring teaspoons) makes about the right size. Place the meatballs on a parchment-lined or lightly greased cookie sheet, and refrigerate them while you prepare the soup.
4. Get out a large pot, at least 6-quart capacity. Pour the olive oil into the bottom of the pot, and add the onions and carrots. Sauté, stirring frequently, until the onions are translucent and beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook for another couple of minutes.
5. Add the broth and herbs, bring to a simmer, and cook gently for 10 minutes.
6. Add the frozen chopped spinach, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, total; the soup will take awhile to come back to a simmer, due to the frozen spinach. Help it along by breaking it up with a fork as it cooks.
7. Gently drop the meatballs into the soup. Simmer the soup for 30 minutes or so, then stir in the pasta, cooking till it's al dente. For orzo, this will take about 8 minutes or so.
8. Add salt and pepper to taste; using reduced-salt canned chicken broth, we added 1 teaspoon salt; and 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper.
9. Serve the soup garnished with freshly grated Parmesan or Asiago cheese.
10. Yield: 29 cups, about sixteen 12-ounce servings.



AT A GLANCE

PREP

25 mins. to 35 mins.

BAKE

1 hrs 10 mins. to 1 hrs 20 mins.

TOTAL

1 hrs 45 mins. to 2 hrs 5 mins.

YIELD

29 cups, about sixteen 12-ounce servings.

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Tips from our bakers

- As written, this makes a thick soup, almost a stew. Add more broth (or cut back on the meatballs and pasta) for a thinner soup.
- To reduce the amount of fat, simmer the meatballs in water till thoroughly cooked before adding them to the soup.