

# Lentil Meatballs with Indian Fenugreek Sauce

By feastingathome

Food52 Editors' Comments: WHO: Feastingathome is a caterer with a Community Pick already under her belt. WHAT: Hearty vegan and gluten-free "meatballs" doused in a creamy turmeric-hued sauce made of coconut milk. HOW: Form "meatballs" from lentils, quinoa, and tofu while you simmer together a cozy sauce of coconut milk and spices. Bake the meatballs and then nestle them in the same pan as the sauce. WHY WE LOVE IT: Simple enough for a weeknight dinner but hearty enough to pack for lunch, this warming recipe knocks all "rabbit food" accusations of veganism out of the park. The "meatballs" fell apart a little in the sauce (especially on the second day), but we didn't mind a bit.

Vegan and gluten-free, these flavorful meatballs are served in a savory fenugreek coconut sauce.

Serves 4 to 6 Lentil Meatballs:

- 1 cup small caviar lentils (uncooked)
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1/2 cup quinoa (uncooked)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- 6 ounces firm tofu
- 1 to 2 tablespoon olive oil

Coconut Fenugreek Sauce:

- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon ginger, minced
- 1 teaspoon turmeric, grated (or 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric)
- 1 1/2 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large tomato, diced
- 1 tablespoon dried fenugreek leaves
- 1 13.5-ounce can coconut milk (not light)
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/4 teaspoon cracked pepper

1. Bring lentils, fennel seeds, and 3 cups of water to a boil over high heat in a small pot. Cover, turn heat to low, and simmer 25 minutes. Drain well.
2. Over high heat, bring quinoa and 1 cup of water to boil in a small pot. Cover, turn heat to low, simmer 15 minutes, turn heat off, and leave covered.
3. Make the sauce: In a skillet or medium pot, sauté the garlic and ginger in olive oil over medium heat until just golden, stirring often to prevent burning. Add turmeric (fresh or dried) and sauté 1 more minute. Add diced tomato and sauté until most of the juices evaporate, about 5 to 8 minutes.

Stir in coconut milk, fenugreek leaves, lime juice, brown sugar, salt, cayenne, and pepper. Taste and adjust seasoning. Bring to a simmer, then turn off the heat until ready to serve.

4. Make the meatballs: Preheat oven to 400° F. In a food processor, pulse the quinoa and half the lentils until the texture is that of coarse sand. Place in a large bowl and add the remaining lentils, chopped cilantro, salt, and granulated garlic to the bowl and mix well. In the same food processor, combine tofu and 1 to 2 tablespoons of oil. (The tofu will bind the mixture and the oil will keep it from drying out.) Pulse the tofu and oil until smooth, scraping down the sides as necessary. Scoop it into the lentil mixture and combine well. Prepare a parchment-lined baking sheet. With your hands, knead the lentil mixture briefly until it's thoroughly mixed and the salt and spices are evenly distributed. Form small ping-pong-sized balls. Place on baking sheet and place in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes.
5. Warm the sauce and arrange the warm lentil meatballs in it. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve immediately.