

KELLY MARIE'S ITALIAN MEATBALLS IN RICH TOMATO SAUCE

THIS RECIPE IS BEST MADE A DAY AHEAD, AND THESE DIRECTIONS REFLECT THAT.

SAUCE

1/4 CUP OLIVE OIL
4 LARGE CLOVES GARLIC, FINE MINCE
1 28 OUNCE CAN WHOLE TOMATOES
1 28 OUNCE CAN TOMATO PUREE
1 6 OUNCE CAN TOMATO PASTE
2 TEASPOONS SALT
1 TEASPOON WHITE SUGAR
1/2 TEASPOON FRESH-GROUND BLACK PEPPER
1/2 TEASPOON DRY OREGANO
1/2 TEASPOON DRY BASIL
4 TABLESPOONS BUTTER

MEATBALLS

5 PIECES ITALIAN BREAD, CRUSTS CUT OFF & 3/8" DICE
1 LARGE EGG
1 TABLESPOON FRESH PARSLEY, FINE MINCE
1 TABLESPOON FRESH GRATED PARMESAN
1/4 TEASPOON GROUND BLACK PEPPER
1/8 TEASPOON GARLIC POWDER
1 POUND LEAN GROUND BEEF

SAUTE THE GARLIC IN THE OLIVE OIL UNTIL SOFT. ADD THE THREE CANS TOMATO PRODUCTS, SALT, AND SUGAR. COVER AND HEAT ON MEDIUM TO A BRISK SIMMER. MEANWHILE, CRUSH BLACK PEPPER, OREGANO, AND BASIL IN A MORTAR AND PESTLE (OR WITH FLAT OF KNIFE) AND ADD TO THE SAUCE. COVER AND RETURN TO A SIMMER FOR NINETY MINUTES (THE BUTTER WILL BE ADDED LAST MINUTE).

COOK THE DICED ITALIAN BREAD IN A 350F OVEN FOR ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES OR UNTIL VERY DRY, STIRRING CAREFULLY. WHILE THE BREAD DRIES, BEAT THE EGG IN A MEDIUM BOWL AND ADD PARSLEY, PARMESAN, BLACK PEPPER, AND GARLIC POWDER. ADD THE BREAD CRUMBS DIRECTLY FROM THE HOT OVEN AND TOSS UNTIL THOROUGHLY MIXED. WHEN THE MIXTURE IS ROOM TEMPERATURE, ADD THE BEEF, MIXING WITH (VERY CLEAN) HANDS. FORM INTO GOLFBALL-SIZED MEATBALLS, COVER, AND REFRIGERATE.

AFTER NINETY MINUTES, ADD THE MEATBALLS TO THE SAUCE, RETURN TO AN ACTIVE, COVERED SIMMER, AND COOK THIRTY MORE MINUTES.

COOL THE ENTIRE BATCH, FIRST AT ROOM TEMPERATURE UNCOVERED, THEN COVERED IN THE REFRIGERATOR. THE NEXT DAY, HEAT COVERED AT ABOUT 250F UNTIL HOT ALL THE WAY THROUGH (AN HOUR IS GOOD). FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE SERVING, ADD THE BUTTER AND RETURN TO OVEN, COVERED. FIVE MINUTES LATER, REMOVE FROM OVEN AND REMOVE COVER. STIR CAREFULLY AND SERVE AFTER IT HAS RESTED TEN MINUTES.