



Italian Itty-Bitty Calabrian Ricotta "Polpette" Meatless Balls

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 5 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

roll: to use a rolling pin to flatten dough; use your hands to form a roll or ball shape; or move a round food, like a grape or a meatball, through another food, like sugar or breadcrumbs, to coat it.

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

Equipment

- ☐ Large pot + lid
- ☐ Large mixing bowl
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Wooden spoon or whisk

Ingredients

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- ☐ 2 C ricotta cheese ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1 C instant potato flakes + 1 C water + 1 T nutritional yeast)******
- ☐ 1 C breadcrumbs ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free breadcrumbs)******
- ☐ 1 egg ******(for EGG ALLERGY sub 1 T ground flaxseeds + 1/4 C water, whisked)******
- ☐ 1 tsp salt

□ 1/2 tsp ground black pepper

□ 1/2 tsp garlic powder

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: For 2 C ricotta cheese, substitute 1 C instant potato flakes + 1 C water + 1 T nutritional yeast.

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free breadcrumbs.

Egg: For 1 egg, substitute 1 T ground flaxseed + 1/4 C water. Whisk until fully absorbed and thickened.

Instructions

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intro

“Ciao” (Chow) or “Hello” in Italian! Polpette (Pole-pet-eh) are traditional Italian meatballs typically made from ground meat, such as beef or pork, mixed with breadcrumbs, cheese, eggs, and various seasonings. They are then simmered in a rich tomato sauce and served as a hearty main dish or as part of a pasta meal. This SFC version of Polpette will be meatless! Instead of using ground beef or pork, we will make seasoned ricotta balls and then simmer them in tomato sauce. Let’s dive in!

measure + mix

In a large mixing bowl, measure **2 cups ricotta cheese, 1 cup breadcrumbs, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper**, and **1/2 teaspoon garlic powder**. Stir with a wooden spoon or whisk until well combined.

scrumptious science

Ricotta cheese is a smooth and creamy white cheese. Ricotta is one of the simplest types of cheese to make. In fact, you might have the ingredients in your refrigerator right now! All you need to make ricotta cheese is 4 cups of whole milk, the juice of 1 lemon, and cheesecloth. (A strainer lined with a coffee filter can also work, but it will be a slow process.) The acid in the lemon juice will react with the milk. This reaction will cause the milk to separate into curds (solid) and whey (liquid). Pour the curd and whey over a bowl and strainer lined with cheesecloth. The whey will drain away, and the curds that are left can be formed into many types of cheese. Simply add a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt, then whisk the mixture, and you will have your own homemade ricotta cheese.

scoop + roll

Using a teaspoon, scoop out small balls of the ricotta dough. Then, roll them around in your clean hands until smooth. You want each of the polpette balls to resemble a small pebble. Also, make sure to roll them

tightly or else they will fall apart while cooking.

simmer + serve

In a large pot, cover the bottom with a thick layer of the **Terrific Five-Ingredient Tomato Sauce**. Then, turn the heat to medium and begin placing the ricotta polpette in an even layer on top of the tomato sauce. Finally, spoon a bit more sauce over the polpette, cover the pot with a lid, and cook for 5 minutes! Don't stir the polpette once they are in the pot. Stirring them will cause polpette to stick to the pot. Serve and eat! "Buon appetito" (Bwohn ap-peh-TEE-toe) or "Enjoy your meal" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Ricotta!

Hi, I'm Ricotta!

"Ciao! That's "Hello" in Italian, and I'm an Italian cheese! I'm soft and light, and you can use me in entrées (that's a fancy French word for a main dish) and desserts. As a youngster, my flavor is mild, but I get more tangy with age."

Ricotta (literally "recooked") is an Italian cheese that uses whey, a low-fat, nutritious liquid by-product of cheese production. It is usually made from cows' milk but may also be produced using the milk of sheep (Ricotta Romana) or Italian water buffalo (Ricotta di Bufala Campana).

An ancient method of making ricotta existed in the second millennium BCE using ceramic milk boilers. Metal boilers are used today, but the process is similar.

Most of the milk protein is removed when making cheese, but some protein remains in the whey. The whey is heated to near boiling with a little acid, and the combination of low pH and high temperature denatures the protein, removing its natural qualities and causing it to form a fine curd. Once cooled, the curd is separated by passing through a fine cloth.

This curd, after drainage, is ricotta. Because ricotta is made from whey rather than milk, it is technically considered a whey cheese. Ricotta is a creamy white, fresh cheese (as opposed to ripened or aged) and tastes slightly sweet. Its texture is similar to cottage cheese; however, ricotta has less liquid, more fat, and is creamier.

Like many fresh cheeses, ricotta is highly perishable. However, it can last longer if cheesemakers put ricotta through extra processing, such as baking, salting, smoking, or additional fermentation.

Chefs and home cooks use ricotta in desserts like cannoli, cheesecake, and pies. It is also a traditional ingredient in Italian pasta dishes like lasagne, manicotti, and ravioli.

A half cup of whole-milk ricotta contains around 13 grams of fat, 9 grams of protein, and 20 percent of the daily value of calcium.