

Sarah's Chicken Parmigiana Meatballs

Makes: 24 one-inch meatballs

Meatball Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ cups panko breadcrumbs (plain or Italian-seasoned)
- ½ cup milk
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (about 2 teaspoons)
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoons Italian herb seasoning (omit if using seasoned breadcrumbs)
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 to 4 cups tomato sauce (homemade or store-bought)



For the Topping:

- ⅓ to ½ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon Italian herb seasoning
- 1 ½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. **Preheat the oven** to 400°F. Pour 3 cups of tomato sauce into a 9×13-inch casserole dish and spread evenly.
2. **Prepare the meatballs:** In a large bowl, combine the panko breadcrumbs and milk. Let soak for 1 minute. Add the ground chicken, Parmesan cheese, eggs, garlic, parsley, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Use your hands to mix the ingredients until well combined, about 1 to 2 minutes.
3. **Form the meatballs:** Roll the mixture into meatballs approximately 1 inch in diameter and place them in the prepared casserole dish. The top third of the meatballs should remain uncovered by sauce; add up to 1 additional cup of tomato sauce, if needed, to achieve this.
4. **Bake:** Bake until the meatballs are cooked through and reach an internal temperature of at least 165°F, about 20 to 25 minutes.
5. **Meanwhile, prepare the panko topping:** In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, Italian seasoning and olive oil. Mix until the breadcrumbs are evenly coated; set aside.
6. **Add the topping:** Remove the casserole dish from the oven. Sprinkle the mozzarella and Parmesan evenly over the meatballs, then evenly distribute the panko topping over the cheese.
7. **Broil:** Turn the oven broiler to high. Return the dish to the top rack and broil for 2 to 3 minutes, watching closely, until the breadcrumbs are golden brown and the cheese is melted and bubbly. Remove immediately and let cool for a few minutes before serving.

8. **Store:** Baked meatballs can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Raw meatballs may be prepared in advance and refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 3 days, or frozen for up to 2 months.
9. **To bake frozen meatballs:** The meatballs may be thawed overnight in the refrigerator and baked in the sauce according to the directions above. Alternatively, frozen meatballs can be baked directly in the sauce; cover the pan with foil and add additional baking time, starting with 10 minutes, until the meatballs are fully cooked. Remove the foil, add the toppings and broil as directed.