

Chicken-Zucchini Meatballs with Feta

By Ali Slagle

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Yield: 4 servings

Time: 45 minutes

“These meatballs harbor a secret: They’re half vegetable, half chicken. More than just a surprise, the grated zucchini provides moisture that ground chicken can lack. Roast more zucchini next to the meatballs on the sheet pan, then top everything with feta tossed with lemon juice. For an easy starch, add chickpeas to the feta, or toast bread or pita on the free rack in the oven.”

INGREDIENTS

3 large zucchinis (about 1 1/2 pounds)
Kosher salt and black pepper
1 large shallot, halved
1/2 cup panko
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon red-pepper flakes
1 pound ground chicken or turkey
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, basil, parsley or dill, plus more for serving
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing and drizzling
3 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 large lemon)
4 ounces feta

PREPARATION

1. Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Cut 2 of the zucchini into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Transfer to a plate, season with salt, and set aside.
2. Working over a large bowl, using the large holes of a box grater, grate the remaining zucchini. Grate 1 shallot half into the bowl as well. Add the panko, cumin, 1/2 teaspoon red-pepper flakes and 1/2 teaspoon salt, and use your hands to toss until combined. Add the chicken and herbs and toss gently until combined.
3. Lightly grease a baking sheet. With wet hands, form the chicken mixture into 16 meatballs (around 2 to 3 tablespoons each) and place them on one side of the baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and roast for 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, pat the sliced zucchini dry, then lightly coat with about 1 tablespoon olive oil. Season with pepper.
5. Coarsely chop the remaining shallot half and transfer to a small bowl. Add the lemon juice, season with salt, and stir to combine.
6. Add the sliced zucchini to the other half of the baking sheet, moving the meatballs over, if necessary. Bake until the meatballs are cooked through and the zucchini is golden on the underside, another 15 to 20 minutes. For more browned meatballs, broil for a few minutes, if desired.

7. Meanwhile, crumble the feta into the shallot mixture. Add the 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon red-pepper flakes. Stir, breaking up the feta a bit, and season to taste with salt and pepper.
8. Eat the meatballs and zucchini with a drizzle of the feta sauce and more fresh herbs.