



# BEEF & AUBERGINE MEATBALLS WITH POLENTA AND PARMESAN WITH CAPE OF GOOD HOPE RIEBEEKSRIVIER SOUTHER SLOPES

*Recipes by Ilse van der Merwe*

Meatballs smothered in a hearty tomato sauce on a bed of polenta must be one of the most satisfying and comforting dishes out there. The cubed aubergine lends a tenderness in texture and adds even more umami flavour. The recipe can easily be doubled to serve a crowd.

## INGREDIENTS

(serves 4)

### SAUCE

30 ml extra virgin olive oil  
3/4 onion, chopped (you'll use the other 1/4 below)  
2 cloves garlic, finely grated  
5 ml dried oregano  
5 ml smoked paprika  
30 ml tomato paste  
2 x cans whole Italian tomatoes, puréed in a blender  
15 ml balsamic vinegar  
5 ml sugar  
salt & pepper, to taste

### MEATBALLS

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 medium aubergine, cut into 1cm cubes  
1 sprig rosemary, chopped  
salt & pepper  
500 g extra lean beef mince  
a handful Italian parsley, finely chopped  
1/4 onion, grated or very finely chopped  
fresh basil leaves, to serve  
grated parmesan cheese, to serve

### POLENTA

2 cups milk  
2 cups chicken or vegetable stock  
1 cup quick-cook polenta  
salt & pepper, to taste

## METHOD

### SAUCE

In a medium pot, heat the oil and fry the onion until lightly brown and soft. Add the garlic, oregano and paprika, and stir fry for a minute. Add the tomato paste, puréed tomatoes, balsamic vinegar and sugar, then season with salt & pepper and bring to a simmer over low heat. Cook for about 20 minutes, transfer to a medium size deep baking dish.

### MEATBALLS

Preheat the oven to 200 C. In a wide pan over medium high heat, heat the olive oil and add the aubergine and rosemary. Fry until golden brown and soft, then season with salt & pepper and set aside to cool slightly. In a mixing bowl, add the mince, parsley and onion, and season with salt & pepper. Add the fried aubergine and mix well, using a fork to break up any lumps in the mince. Use a tablespoon to scoop heaps about the size of a golf ball each, and roll gently into balls. Arrange the meatballs on top of the sauce, scooping some of the sauce over the balls if you want to. Bake for 25 minutes at 200 C while you make the polenta.

### POLENTA

In a medium pot, add the milk and stock and bring to a simmer. As soon as it boils, add the polenta while stirring, then continue to stir until the polenta thickens and becomes creamy (5-10 minutes). Season with salt & pepper, then serve in bowls, topped with the meatballs and sauce, some fresh basil leaves and grated parmesan cheese. Wellington rest for at least 10-15 minutes before slicing, then serve with warm mushroom sauce.



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