Giant Pork Meatballs in Tomato Sauce

Serves 4   Prep 20 mins + 30 Mins chilling   Cooking 1h 5 mins   Easy

Ingredients

For the sauce
2 tbsp oil
3 x 400g cans plum tomatoes, drained
2 bay leaves
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper 1-2 pinches brown sugar (optional)

For the meatballs
600g minced pork
1 tbsp fresh sage leaves, finely chopped
1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped
1 small sprig fresh rosemary, leaves picked & finely chopped
60g fresh breadcrumbs
Zest of 1 lemon
1 heaped tbsp Dijon mustard
1 egg, beaten
1 tbsp olive oil
70g grated Parmesan (half in the mix, half to serve)

1. Make the tomato sauce first. Open the tins of tomatoes and rinse off the sauce, to get rid of the tinny taste. Warm the oil in a deep pan on a medium-low heat. Add the tomatoes, breaking them up with a spoon, then stir in the bay leaves, season and leave to simmer gently for 45 mins. Half an hour into the cooking, taste the sauce - add a pinch of brown sugar, if you think it needs it, and a few tbsp of water if the sauce looks too thick and dry. By the end it should be thick and silky.

2. While the sauce is cooking, get on with the meatballs. In a bowl, combine all the ingredients except the oil and half the Parmesan, season, then mix with your hands until well amalgamated. Shape the remaining meatball mix into eight balls then, refrigerate them for 20-30 mins, to firm up.

3. Heat the oven to 200C/ Fan 180C/ Gas 6. Pour a tbsp of oil into the frying pan, heat over a medium-high flame, then lightly brown the meatballs on all sides. Transfer to a baking dish just large enough to hold them, pour on the sauce. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and bake for 20 mins, until firm to the touch.

4. Serve with pasta ribbons and a salad on the side.