

Chicken-Apple Sausage Cilantro Albondigas

Makes 28 to 30 albondigas

I adore albondigas, and thank you, Tyler Florence, for the idea in one of your books for using chicken-apple sausages to make meatballs. It is brilliant and makes the lightest meatballs. Serve in the Caramelized Chicken Soup or with the Chipotle Tomato Sauce (see recipes).

2 pounds uncooked chicken-apple sausage (see Note), casings removed

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1/4 cup minced onion

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon red chile powder

Fresh ground black pepper

2 eggs, beaten

1/2 cup chopped cilantro

1/2 cup pine nuts

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup fresh breadcrumbs (see Note)

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese + 1/4 cup more for sprinkling

Instructions: Preheat an oven to 375°. Lightly grease a large dark baking sheet or broiler pan with olive oil. (The dark color encourages caramelization.)

Place chicken-apple sausage in a large bowl with the salt, onion, cumin, chile powder and black pepper. Mix in the beaten eggs gently with a large spoon.

Chop the cilantro and pine nuts together and add to the meat mixture along with the olive oil, breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Using your hands, thoroughly mix all the ingredients, making sure you don't over mix.

Wet your hands with cold water and form the meatballs into a size slightly smaller than a golf ball. Arrange meatballs on the baking pan about 1 inch apart. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until lightly browned around the edges. During the last 5 minutes, sprinkle the remaining Parmesan cheese over the top of the meatballs.

Note: Fresh chicken-apple sausage is available in the butcher counter of grocery stores like Whole Foods. If you cannot find it, you can substitute ground turkey (thigh meat) or ground chicken. To make fresh breadcrumbs, buy a baguette and let it sit in its wrapper for a few days. Slice off the crust, thinly along the sides, top and bottom. Tear the bread into large pieces and place in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse into crumbs. Place extra crumbs in a zip-top bag and freeze for future use.

Per meatball: 91 calories, 5 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 7 g fat (2 g saturated), 28 mg cholesterol, 347 mg sodium, 0 fiber.