

Chicken Parmesan Meatballs



This makes 12 large-ish meatballs. Let the meatballs freeze at this point (after initial 15-minute bake) for future use, transfer the frozen meatballs to the fridge in the morning, then heat them up in a 350°F oven for 15 minutes (before proceeding with broiling) upon returning later that night.

1 1/4 pounds ground chicken
1/2 cup breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons chopped onion
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1/2 cup Pecorino (or Parm)
salt to taste
pepper to taste
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
1 egg, whisked
zest of half a lemon
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 14-ounce can store-bought pizza sauce (such as Don Pepino's)
about 4 ounces fresh mozzarella (a dozen thin slices; to pile on the cheese would be to cancel out the fact that you were virtuous enough to replace fatty beef with lean chicken)

Preheat oven to 400°F, setting rack to upper third part of oven. In a large bowl, using your hands, gently mix together first 11 ingredients. Shape into lacrosse-ball size balls (that would be somewhere between golf and tennis) and place a few inches from each other on a foil-lined baking sheet. In a small bowl, mix one spoonful of your pizza sauce with olive oil. Brush this mixture on top of each meatball. Bake for 15 minutes.

Remove meatballs from oven, spoon some sauce on top of each meatball, and cover each with a slice of cheese. Broil another 3 to 5 minutes until cheese is bubbly and golden. Heat remaining sauce in a small saucepan. Serve meatballs with a dollop of sauce and a raw Tuscan kale salad that has been shredded and tossed with shallots, Pecorino, olive oil, salt, and pepper.