Whole Wheat Spaghetti with Meatballs

This meatball recipe can easily be doubled and leftovers can be frozen for another meal. One pound of ground beef will yield two batches (8 servings) of meatballs. To reheat, thaw the meatballs and sauce completely in the refrigerator and simmer on the stove top.

Meatballs with Marinara:
- 5 oz. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- ½ small onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup whole wheat bread crumbs
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. dried Italian seasoning (basil, thyme, oregano)
- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ½ lb. 94% lean ground beef
- 3 cups lower-sodium marinara sauce

Directions:
1. Prepare meatballs: Place oven rack 6-8” from top of oven. Preheat broiler. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine spinach, onion, breadcrumbs, garlic, salt, Italian seasoning, and black pepper. Crumble ground beef into spinach mixture and mix well with clean hands. Shape mixture into 12 meatballs (about 1-1/2” diameter) and place on baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Broil meatballs until golden brown on top (about 8-10 minutes). Turn over with tongs and broil until golden brown on the other side about 5-6 minutes. Place meatballs in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cover with 3 cups of marinara sauce. Reduce to medium heat, cover partially, and simmer until meatballs are cooked through (160°F internal temperature), about 15 minutes.
2. While meatballs are broiling, place a large pot of water to boil. Add spaghetti, lower to medium-high heat, and gently boil 8 minutes until al dente; drain. Return pot to medium heat, warm remaining 1 cup of marinara. Stir in spaghetti and remove from heat. To serve, top each serving of spaghetti with 3 meatballs, sauce, 1 T. parmesan cheese, and chopped parsley, if desired.

Nutrition Information (per ¼ recipe, about 1 cup of spaghetti with 3 meatballs):
- 311 calories, 25 g protein, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 55 g carbohydrate, 9 g fiber, 40 mg cholesterol, 539 mg sodium
1 serving equals: 2 fruit/veg, 1 whole grain, 0.5 protein/dairy

Green Salad with Pears, Dried Cranberries, and Gorgonzola
- 8 cups chopped red leaf lettuce
- 2 pears, chopped
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup crumbled gorgonzola or feta cheese
- ¼ cup light raspberry vinaigrette

Combine all ingredients and serve immediately.

Nutrition Information (per ¼ recipe, about 2 cups salad):
- 153 calories, 3 g protein, 7 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 22 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 6 mg cholesterol, 348 mg sodium
1 serving equals: 2.5 fruit/veg, 1 fat

Total Meal Nutrition Information (per ¼ each recipe):
- 464 calories, 28 g protein, 15 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 77 g carbohydrate, 13 g fiber, 46 mg cholesterol, 887 mg sodium
1 serving equals: 4.5 fruit/veg, 1 whole grain, 0.5 protein/dairy, 1 fat

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### Shopping List

**Produce Department**
- 8 cups chopped red leaf lettuce (see tip #1)
- 2 pears, chopped
- ½ small onion
- 1 garlic clove
- Chopped fresh parsley to garnish, optional

**Dry Goods Department**
- 8 oz. whole wheat spaghetti (see tip #2)
- 4 cups lower-sodium marinara sauce (see tip #3)
- ½ cup light raspberry vinaigrette or your favorite light salad dressing
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup whole wheat bread crumbs
- ½ tsp. dried Italian seasoning (basil, thyme, oregano)

**Meat/ Dairy Department**
- ½ lb. 94% lean ground beef (see tip #4)
- ¼ cup crumbled gorgonzola or feta cheese
- 4 T. grated Parmesan cheese

**Frozen Foods Department**
- 5 oz. frozen chopped spinach (see tip #5)

### Smart Shopper Tips

**Smart Shopper Tip #1:**
Red leaf lettuce is a beautiful and nutritious addition to this salad. If you can't find it, feel free to substitute any other darker green lettuce variety such as green leaf or romaine. Darker green lettuces offer more nutrients than the pale varieties, such as iceberg.

**Smart Shopper Tip #2:**
Whole wheat spaghetti has a hearty flavor and offers more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than refined white spaghetti. Example brands include Mueller's Whole Grain, Ronzoni Healthy Harvest, Hodgson Mills Whole Wheat, and Whole Foods 365 Whole Wheat.

**Smart Shopper Tip #3:**
Store bought marinara sauce can be high in sodium. Look for a variety that has less than 20% Daily Value for sodium. A widely available brand is Ragu Light Tomato Basil.

**Smart Shopper Tip #4:**
Choose ground beef that is 90% or more lean. Ground turkey breast or lean ground chicken can also be used. Be sure to check the label for a package that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

**Smart Shopper Tip #5:**
To use frozen spinach, thaw it completely in the refrigerator or in the microwave on the defrost setting. Wrap the spinach in a clean kitchen towel and squeeze out excess moisture.