

CUMIN-CHICKEN MEATBALLS *with Green Chile Sauce*

FOR THE MEATBALLS

1 slice white sandwich bread
(or use ½ cup fluffy pulled-out
center of any bread, such as a
baguette or a country loaf)

2 tablespoons milk, preferably whole

¾ teaspoon cumin seeds

¼ teaspoon red chile flakes

¼ teaspoon ground cumin

1 pound ground chicken

1 large egg, lightly beaten

2 garlic cloves, grated on a
Microplane or minced

Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

1½ teaspoons kosher salt, plus
more for sprinkling

½ teaspoon freshly ground black
pepper

Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

FOR THE SAUCE

2 to 3 jalapeños, seeded

¼ cup fresh parsley leaves

¼ cup fresh cilantro or basil leaves

2 garlic cloves, grated on a
Microplane or minced

¼ teaspoon kosher salt, plus
more to taste

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon lemon juice, plus more
to taste

These relatively mild, cumin-flecked chicken meatballs are a gentle foil to the vibrant, fiery green chile sauce served with them. Chile pepper avoiders (i.e., my small child Dahlia) will happily eat the meatballs plain, while heat seekers (i.e., the adults, such as my husband and me) can slather them in sauce. If you love garlicky, spicy, herbal flavors, keep this sauce recipe handy. It's excellent on pretty much everything, from roast chicken and fish to grilled steaks, to burgers, to plain rice, and will keep for a week in the refrigerator. It's also nice cooled down with a drizzle of plain yogurt, which makes it appealingly creamy, too.

You can use either white- or dark-meat chicken to make the meatballs; the white meat will be milder, the dark meat more tender. Or substitute ground pork or turkey.

1. Make the meatballs: Combine the bread and milk in a large bowl, and set it aside for the bread to soak while you toast the cumin seeds.

2. In a small, dry skillet over medium heat, toast the cumin seeds until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the chile flakes and toast 30 seconds longer. Stir in the ground cumin and set aside.

3. To the bowl containing the bread and milk, add the chicken, egg, garlic, lemon zest, Worcestershire, salt, pepper, and toasted spices. Mix until just combined, and form into 1-inch meatballs. (At this point you can wrap the meatballs well and refrigerate overnight before cooking.)

4. Heat the broiler. Set the rack at least 4 inches from the heat source.

5. Arrange the meatballs in a single layer, not touching, on one or two rimmed baking sheets. Drizzle them with olive oil and broil, checking often and shaking the baking sheet occasionally to help them brown all over, 4 to 7 minutes.

6. While the meatballs are cooking, **make the sauce:** In a blender, combine the jalapeños, parsley, cilantro, garlic, salt, olive oil, lemon juice, and just enough water to make the mixture move in the blender (1 to 2 tablespoons). Blend until smooth, and add more salt if needed (you might need up to another ¼ teaspoon). Serve the sauce alongside the meatballs.

TOTAL TIME: 25 MINUTES

SERVES 3 OR 4