

Italian Meatball Crockpot Stew 8 generous servings

Don't want potatoes? Skip them and add small chunks of zucchini during last hour or so of cooking instead. This dish could go a number of ways--other fresh vegetables could be added toward the end or it could lean toward Mexico with chili powder, a bit of cumin, some frozen corn, and a can of pinto beans in lieu of the potatoes. Like green peas? Stir in a 1/2 cup of frozen or fresh peas for the last 30 minutes.

- 1 pound bag baby carrots
- 1 pound potatoes cut into 1 - 1 ½ in. chunks or the small baby, red potatoes, which might need no cutting at all
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 8 ounces fresh sliced mushrooms
- 16 ounces (one pound) Pre-cooked, frozen **meatballs**
- 1 large onion, chopped coarsely (use more if you like onion a lot)
- 2 15-ounce cans beef broth, low sodium (or one 32-ounce box)
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic (2 teaspoons chopped) or more to taste
- 1 tablespoon each dried oregano and basil
- 1 bay leaf, optional
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper or a few drops of hot sauce, optional
- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese and sliced Kalamata olives for garnish, optional

- 1 -To 6-quart Slow Cooker, add carrots and potatoes; sprinkle with pepper. Add mushrooms, meatballs and onion.
- 2 -In a bowl, whisk flour into beef broth with 1/2 teaspoon salt.
- 3 -Add the beef broth mixture and rest of ingredients(except Parmesan and Kalamata olives) and sprinkle again with a little fresh ground pepper to Slow Cooker. Stir gently, leaving carrots and potatoes at bottom of pot as they take longer to cook.
- 4 -Set to "low" and cook all day. 8 hours is plenty. (I've also cooked this on high for 4-5 hours)
- 5 -Ladle into bowls and top with cheese and olives, if desired. Serve w/ crusty bread (to mop juice) and salad.

SHOPPING LIST:

- PRODUCE: Bag of chopped Romaine Basket of cherry tomatoes Clove garlic Large onion 8 ounces fresh sliced mushrooms 1 pound baby carrots 1 pound baby or other potatoes
- OTHER: Parmesan cheese Sliced Kalamata olives (if using)
- FROZEN: 16 ounces frozen meatballs
- CANNED: 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes and 2 15 ounce cans low sodium beef broth

PANTRY ITEMS:

All purpose flour, salt, pepper, crushed red pepper or hot sauce (if using), dried oregano and basil