

**VEGAN SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS**

This recipe is absolutely fabulous. The combination of lentils and walnuts gives the texture of meat and fennel seeds are a revelation for giving you that true Italian flavour. I have adapted this recipe from [www.fragrantvanilla.com](http://www.fragrantvanilla.com). To make this recipe oil-free, simply sauté the onions and garlic in water and eliminate it from the sauce. Choose salt free organic tomato products if possible.

**Meatballs** (makes 24 balls)

* 2/3 cup uncooked lentils
* Filtered water
* 1 tsp. olive oil
* 1 small onion, diced finely
* 2 garlic cloves, minced or diced finely
* 2 Tbs. tamari or Braggs soy sauce
* ¼ cup tomato paste
* 1 tsp. dried oregano
* 1 tsp. dried basil
* 1 tsp. fennel seeds
* ¼ tsp. sea salt
* 2 cups chopped walnuts
* 1 cup rolled oats (gluten-free if you can find it)

**Sauce**

* 1 Tbs. olive oil
* 1 large onion, diced
* 4 garlic cloves, diced finely or minced
* 2 tsp. dried basil
* 2 tsp. dried oregano
* 2 tsp. fennel seeds
* ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
* 1 large can diced tomatoes
* 1 cup tomato paste (so use remainder from meatballs plus 1 small can)
* 1 ½ cups filtered water
* 1 tsp. sea salt (or to taste)

**Directions**

1. To make the meatballs, rinse the lentils and add to a pot and add plenty of filtered water (at least 3-4 cups). Bring to a boil, reduced heat to a simmer (3 or 4), cover and cook for about 40 minutes until the lentils are tender. Drain and set aside to cool.
2. In a pan, heat (on medium) the olive oil and onions, cook until the onions are softened and tender (about 5 minutes).
3. Add the garlic and sauté a minute more until fragrant. Set aside and cool.
4. In a food processor, add the lentils, onion mixture, and the remaining meatball ingredients. Pulse until everything is blended but not completely smooth.
5. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll the meatball mixture into 1 ½ inch balls and place them on the baking sheet. Place them in the oven and bake for 30 minutes or until firm but still soft in the middle.
6. While the meatballs are baking, prepare the sauce. In a medium saucepan, heat oil and add the onions and sauté for 5 minutes on medium heat.
7. Add the garlic and spices and cook for a minute until fragrant.
8. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, water and sea salt and bring to a simmer.
9. Reduce heat to low (2 or 3) cover and cook for about 15 minutes until the flavours have combined.
10. When the meatballs have finished cooking, toss them with the sauce, and serve garnished with parsley over pasta.

**Additional Tips**

1. These meatballs and the sauce freeze really well so it is easy to make individual servings. A standard adult serving will include 4 meatballs, sauce and ½ to 1 cup of pasta.
2. Freeze the meatballs separately from the sauce in a big freezer bag and freeze the sauce in glass containers.
3. Brown rice pasta is a great alternative to wheat pasta as it is gluten free. Follow the directions on the package as it can get mushy if you overcook it. Rinse in cold water, drain and serve immediately.