

Chicken Meatballs with Marry Me Orzo

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Tender chicken meatballs are always a hit at the dinner table, and when you pair them with creamy *Marry Me Orzo*, you've got the ultimate comfort meal. This dish brings together juicy baked chicken meatballs and orzo pasta simmered in a rich Parmesan and sun-dried tomato cream sauce. It's the kind of meal that feels special enough for date night yet easy enough for a weeknight family dinner.

The name "*Marry Me Orzo*" comes from the idea that the flavors are so irresistible, they just might win someone's heart. I love how the baked meatballs soak up the creamy sauce, making every bite flavorful and hearty. If you're looking for a one-pan recipe that's simple, satisfying, and a little bit romantic, this is it.

Things to Know About Chicken Meatballs with Marry Me Orzo

- **Bake, don't fry:** Baking the meatballs keeps them juicy without extra oil, and it's hands-off while you prepare the orzo.
- **Cream swap:** Heavy cream gives the sauce its velvety texture, but you can lighten it up with half-and-half or even whole milk (just simmer a little longer to thicken).

- **Cheese matters:** Freshly grated Parmesan melts more smoothly than pre-shredded, giving the sauce that silky finish.
- **Customize the spice:** Red pepper flakes add a gentle kick—use more if you like a little heat, or leave them out for a milder dish.
- **Make it ahead:** The meatballs can be baked in advance and refrigerated (up to 3 days) or frozen (up to 3 months). Add them to the orzo to reheat.
- **Serving ideas:** This dish is filling on its own, but it pairs beautifully with a crisp green salad or roasted vegetables.
- **Storage tips:** Leftovers keep well in the fridge for 2–3 days. Reheat gently on the stove with a splash of broth or cream to loosen the sauce.
- If you loved these **Chicken Meatballs with Marry Me Orzo**, you'll also enjoy other comforting Italian favorites: try my Shrimp Marry Me Orzo for a seafood twist, or cozy up with Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup for a hearty weeknight dinner.

Chicken Meatballs with Marry Me Orzo

Ingredients

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

• For the Chicken Meatballs

- 1 lb ground chicken
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp onion, grated or finely minced
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- salt and pepper to taste

• For the Marry Me Orzo

- 2 cups orzo pasta
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 3 cups chicken broth (plus more if needed)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
- 1 tsp fresh thyme (or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried)
- 2 cups baby spinach (optional)
- Salt & black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Bake the Meatballs:

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a mixing bowl, combine ground chicken, egg, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, garlic, onion, parsley, salt, and pepper. Mix until just combined and roll into about 18–20 small meatballs.

Place on the prepared baking sheet and bake for 18–20 minutes, until cooked through and lightly golden.

2. Start the Orzo:

While the meatballs bake, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and sun-dried tomatoes, sautéing for 1–2 minutes. Stir in the orzo and toast lightly.

3. Simmer the Sauce:

Pour in chicken broth and heavy cream. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the orzo is al dente and creamy, about 10–12 minutes. Add more broth as needed to keep it saucy.

4. Finish the Dish:

Stir in Parmesan, red pepper flakes, thyme, salt, and pepper. Add the baked meatballs to the skillet and simmer for 2–3 minutes so the flavors meld.

5. Add Spinach & Serve:

Stir in baby spinach (if using) until wilted. Garnish with extra Parmesan and parsley. Serve immediately.