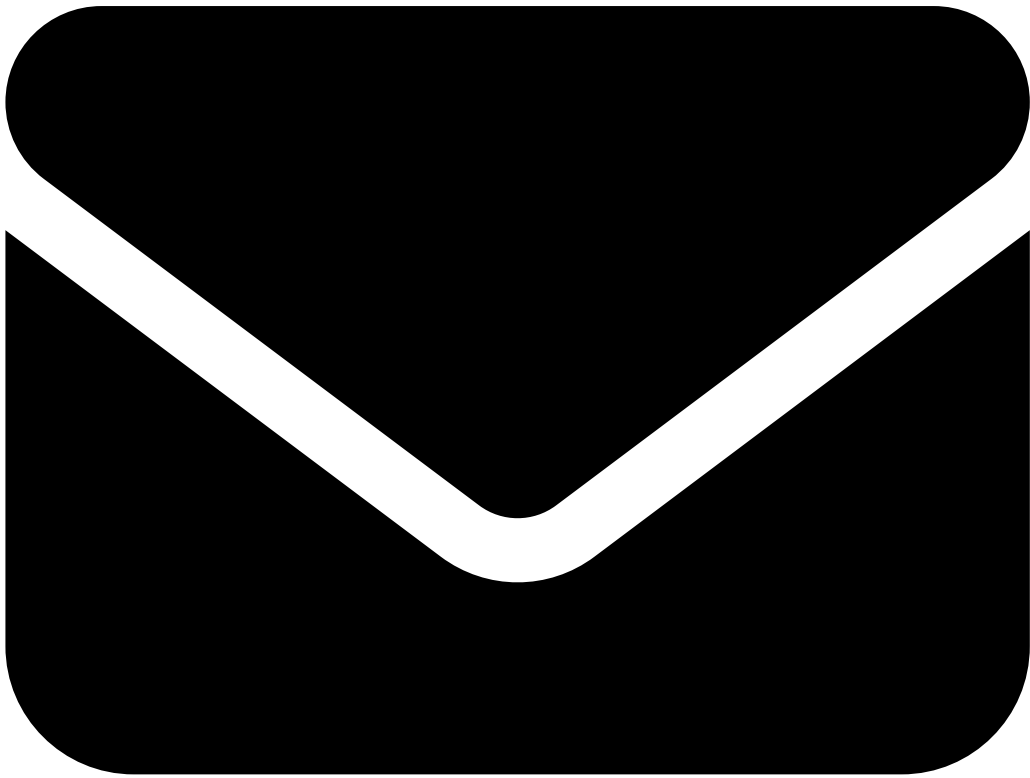


Italian Bread Meatballs (Polpette di Pane)

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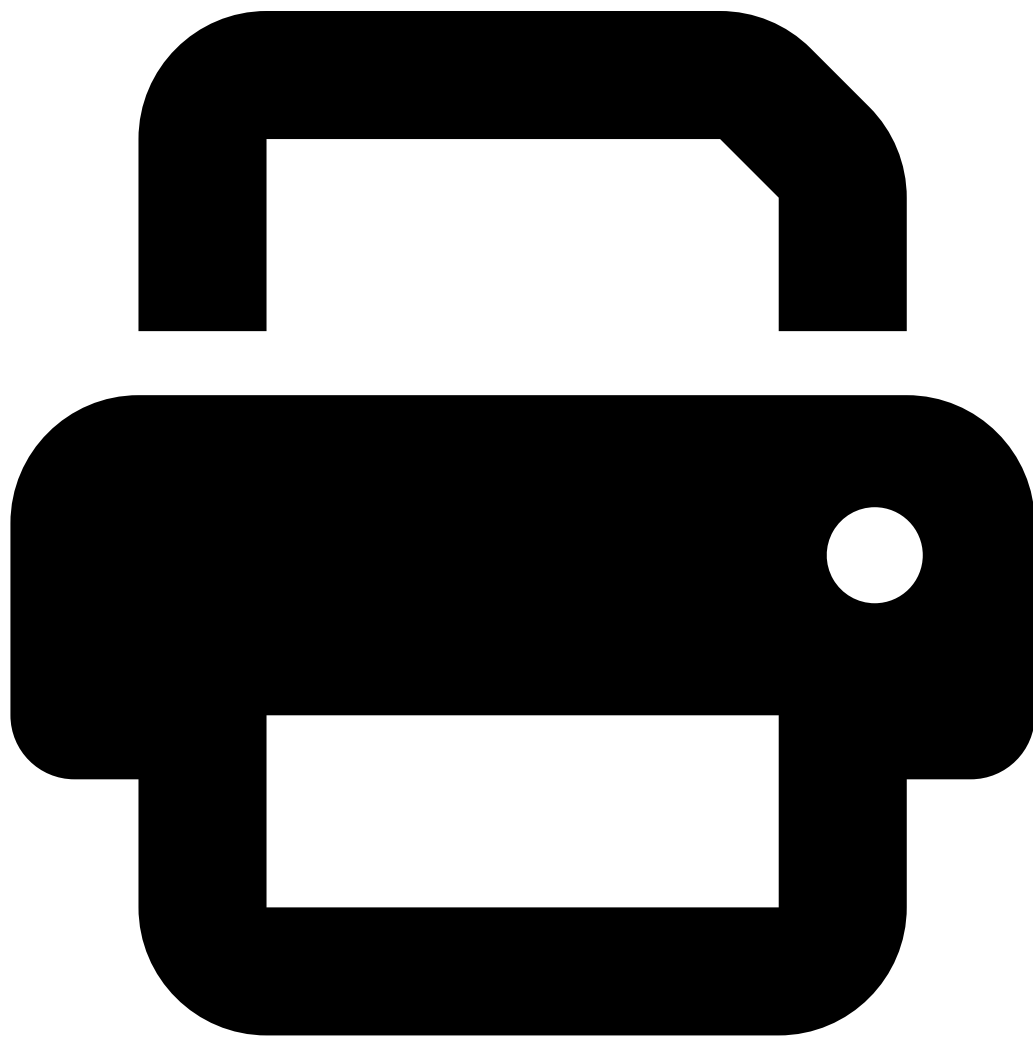
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These Italian bread meatballs, also known as *polpette di pane*, are a delicious way to turn stale bread into something special. Made with simple ingredients like Italian bread, eggs, Parmesan cheese, garlic, and fresh parsley, these meatless meatballs are crispy on the outside and soft on the inside.

Growing up with Italian cooking, you learn pretty quickly that good bread never needs to go to waste. Recipes like these are a perfect example of *cucina povera*, the traditional Italian way of making delicious meals from simple, affordable ingredients you already have in your kitchen.

I love serving these bread meatballs as an appetizer, a side dish, or gently simmered in homemade tomato sauce. They're simple, comforting, and full of old-fashioned Italian flavor. If you've never tried meatballs without meat, this is a recipe you need to make!

Why You'll Love These Italian Bread Meatballs

- **A great way to use stale bread:** Give leftover Italian bread a delicious second life.
- **Simple ingredients:** You probably have most of what you need already.
- **Meatless and satisfying:** Parmesan, garlic, and parsley add plenty of flavor.
- **Versatile:** Serve them as an appetizer, side dish, or with your favorite Italian tomato sauce.

Tips for Making the Best Bread Meatballs

- **Remove excess milk.** Too much moisture can make the mixture difficult to shape.
- **Use your hands to mix.** This makes it easier to feel whether the mixture is holding together properly.
- **Adjust the consistency.** If the mixture is too wet, add a little more Parmesan or breadcrumbs. If it's too dry, add a small amount of milk.
- **Fry a test piece.** Cook a small portion first to check the seasoning and make sure the mixture holds together before frying the entire batch.

What to Serve with Italian Bread Meatballs

These traditional Italian bread meatballs are delicious served straight from the skillet while they're still warm and crispy.

You can serve them as an appetizer with marinara sauce for

dipping, alongside roasted vegetables, or as a side dish with your favorite Italian meal.

For a softer, saucier version, add the fried bread meatballs to a pot of homemade tomato sauce and simmer gently for a few minutes. Handle them carefully because bread meatballs are more delicate than meat-based meatballs.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are Italian bread meatballs made without meat?

Yes! Traditional polpette di pane are meatless bread-based meatballs made with ingredients such as stale bread, eggs, cheese, and herbs. Recipes vary by region and family.

Why are my bread meatballs falling apart?

The mixture may be too wet or may not have enough binding ingredients. Squeeze excess milk from the bread and make sure the eggs and cheese are thoroughly mixed in. If necessary, add a little more Parmesan or breadcrumbs.

Can I make bread meatballs ahead of time?

You can prepare the mixture ahead of time and refrigerate it in a covered container until you're ready to shape and fry the meatballs. Keep it refrigerated and cook within a day for the best quality.

Can I cook bread meatballs in tomato sauce?

Yes, but frying them first helps them develop a golden crust and hold their shape. Add them to gently simmering sauce near the end and avoid vigorous stirring.

How to Store and Reheat

Refrigerator: Store leftover cooked bread meatballs in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Reheating: Reheat in a skillet over medium-low heat until warmed through. If they're in tomato sauce, warm them gently in the sauce. An oven or air fryer can help bring back some of their crispness when reheating them without sauce.

Freezing: Bread meatballs are best enjoyed fresh. If freezing, cool them completely and freeze in a single layer before transferring to a freezer-safe container. Their texture may soften after thawing.

A Little Taste of Traditional Italian Cooking

Italian bread meatballs remind me that some of the best recipes come from making the most of what you have. With a few everyday ingredients, you can turn leftover bread into something the whole family will enjoy.

If you make these *polpette di pane*, leave me a comment and let me know how you served them. I love hearing how these traditional Italian dishes find their way into your kitchen!

More Italian Recipes You'll Love

If you love these traditional Italian bread meatballs, here are a few more recipes from my kitchen you might enjoy! From homemade tomato sauce to comforting pasta dishes, these are the kinds of recipes I love sharing with my family.

- **Homemade Italian tomato Sauce** – Perfect for serving with

these bread meatballs.

- **Italian Meatballs** – A classic Italian favorite for Sunday dinner.
- **Homemade Italian Breadcrumbs** – Another great way to use leftover bread.
- **Homemade Italian Focaccia** – Soft, flavorful bread to serve alongside your favorite Italian meal.
- **Easy Italian Pasta Recipes** – Find more comforting pasta dishes for your next family dinner.

My Favorite Kitchen Tools

You don't need fancy equipment to make these Italian bread meatballs, but a few kitchen essentials make preparing them easier. Here are some helpful tools you can find on Amazon.

- **Large Mixing Bowl** – Plenty of room to mix the soaked bread, eggs, cheese, and seasonings.
- **Stainless Steel Skillet** – Ideal for frying the bread meatballs until golden brown.
- **Stainless Steel Tongs** – Helpful for gently turning the meatballs as they fry.
- **Box Grater** – Perfect for freshly grating Parmesan cheese.
- **Spider Strainer** – Makes it easy to lift the fried bread meatballs from the hot oil.

Italian Bread Meatballs (Polpette di Pane)



These traditional Italian bread meatballs are made with stale Italian bread, eggs, Parmesan cheese, garlic, and parsley. Fried until golden brown, they're crispy on the outside, soft inside, and a delicious way to use leftover bread.

- 6 cups stale Italian bread, torn into small pieces
- 1-1½ cups milk, as needed
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- salt and pepper to taste
- olive oil for frying

1. **Soften the bread.** Place the torn stale bread in a large bowl. Pour the milk over the bread a little at a time, allowing it to soften. You want the bread moist but not soaking wet. Squeeze out any excess milk with your hands.
2. **Prepare the mixture.** Add the eggs, grated Parmesan cheese, minced garlic, chopped parsley, salt, and black pepper to the softened bread. Mix thoroughly with your hands until everything is well combined. The mixture should hold together when pressed. If it feels too wet, add a little more Parmesan cheese or breadcrumbs.
3. **Shape the bread meatballs.** Scoop up portions of the mixture and roll them into small balls, or gently flatten them into patties. Press them firmly enough to hold their shape without compacting them too much.

4. **Heat the oil.** Pour enough olive oil into a large skillet to cover the bottom generously. Heat over medium heat until the oil is hot but not smoking.
5. **Fry the bread meatballs.** Carefully place the meatballs in the skillet in batches, leaving space between them. Fry for approximately 3–4 minutes per side, turning gently, until golden brown and crisp on the outside. Adjust the heat as needed so they brown without burning.
6. **Drain and serve.** Transfer the cooked bread meatballs to a paper towel-lined plate to drain any excess oil. Serve hot as an appetizer or side dish, or add them to gently simmering homemade tomato sauce for a softer, saucier version.



Squeeze excess milk from the bread so the mixture holds together. If the mixture is too wet, add a little Parmesan or breadcrumbs. Fry a small test piece first to check the seasoning and consistency. Turn gently to keep the bread meatballs from breaking apart.

Main Course, Side Dish

Italian

traditional Italian bread meatballs a