

Vegan French Onion Meatballs with Gravy

Prep: 10 minutes • Cook: 30 minutes

Tender lentil meatballs are baked or air-fried, then cloaked in a sweet-savory French onion gravy—comforting, umami-rich, and perfect over creamy mashed potatoes.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons flax meal
- 3 tablespoons water (for flax egg)
- 1 1/2 cups lentils (cooked; green or brown)
- 3/4 cup bread crumbs (vegan)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (for meatballs)
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- to taste salt (for meatballs)
- to taste black pepper (for meatballs)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (for gravy)
- 1 large sweet onion (diced)
- 6 cloves garlic (finely chopped)
- 3 sprigs thyme (fresh)
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups vegetable broth
- to taste salt (for gravy)
- to taste black pepper (for gravy)
- splash balsamic vinegar (optional; to taste)

Instructions

1. If baking, preheat oven to 375°F. If air-frying, prepare the air fryer basket with nonstick spray.
2. Make the flax egg: whisk flax meal and water together and let sit 3–5 minutes until thickened.
3. In a large bowl, mash the cooked lentils. Add the flax egg, bread crumbs, olive oil (for meatballs), liquid smoke, soy sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Mix until fully combined.
4. Roll the mixture into meatballs.

5. Bake option: Place meatballs on a sheet pan sprayed with nonstick spray. Bake 10 minutes, flip, then bake about 10 more minutes until firm and lightly browned.
6. Air-fryer option: Spray basket with nonstick spray. Air-fry 8–10 minutes, flipping halfway, until firm and browned.
7. While meatballs cook, make the gravy: Heat olive oil (for gravy) over medium-high in a large nonstick skillet. Add diced onion and chopped garlic, reduce heat to medium, and sauté 5–7 minutes until starting to brown.
8. Add thyme sprigs and brown sugar; cook 5–7 minutes more until onions are golden brown.
9. Stir in flour to coat the onions. Gradually pour in vegetable broth with a pinch of salt and pepper, whisking to combine.
10. Bring to a simmer and cook about 5 minutes, whisking frequently, until the gravy thickens.
11. Remove thyme sprigs; taste and adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper. Optionally add a splash of balsamic vinegar if the gravy needs acidity.
12. Add cooked meatballs to the skillet and toss to coat in the gravy.
13. Serve immediately, ideally over mashed potatoes if desired.

Tags: Vegan, Meatballs, Comfort Food, Lentils, High Protein, French Onion
