Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 10–12 minutes | Total Time: 25–27 minutes
Yield: 12 tuna balls (4 servings) | Difficulty: Easy

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Introduction

If you’re following a ketogenic lifestyle and looking for a quick, flavorful, high-protein snack or meal, these Air Fryer Keto Tuna Balls are about to become your new favorite. Made with pantry staples like canned tuna, almond flour, and Parmesan cheese, they’re crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, and packed with healthy fats and protein — without a single breadcrumb in sight.

The air fryer does the heavy lifting here, delivering that golden, crunchy exterior with a fraction of the oil traditional frying requires. Whether you serve them as an appetizer at your next gathering, pack them for lunch, or enjoy them as a satisfying afternoon snack, these tuna balls are versatile, budget-friendly, and ready in under 30 minutes.

Ingredients

For the Tuna Balls:

- 2 cans (5 oz / 142 g each) tuna in water, drained well
- 1 large egg, beaten
- ½ cup (56 g) almond flour
- ½ cup (50 g) grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup (25 g) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise (full-fat, keto-friendly)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for heat)

For Serving (optional):

- Sugar-free marinara or keto-friendly dipping sauce

- Lemon wedges
- Fresh parsley for garnish

Equipment

- Air fryer (3-quart or larger)
- Mixing bowl
- Fork or spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Parchment paper or air fryer liner (optional)
- Small scoop or spoon for shaping

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Tuna (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Drain the canned tuna thoroughly, pressing it against the strainer with a fork to remove as much liquid as possible. Excess moisture is the enemy of crispy tuna balls, so take an extra minute here. Transfer the drained tuna to a large mixing bowl and flake it apart with a fork until no large chunks remain.

Step 2: Combine the Ingredients (5 minutes | Intensity: Low–Medium)

Add the beaten egg, almond flour, Parmesan cheese, mozzarella, mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, parsley, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes (if using) to

the bowl with the tuna. Mix everything together with a fork or spatula until evenly combined. The mixture should hold together when pressed between your fingers. If it feels too wet, add an additional tablespoon of almond flour; if too dry, add a teaspoon of mayonnaise.

Step 3: Shape the Balls (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Using your hands or a small scoop, roll the mixture into 12 evenly sized balls, about 1½ inches (4 cm) in diameter — roughly the size of a golf ball. Keep your hands slightly damp to prevent sticking. Place the formed balls on a plate or tray.

Step 4: Preheat the Air Fryer (2–3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Preheat your air fryer to 375°F (190°C) for 2–3 minutes. Preheating ensures even cooking and a crispier exterior.

Step 5: Arrange in the Basket (1 minute | Intensity: Low)

Lightly grease the air fryer basket with avocado oil spray or line it with perforated parchment paper. Place the tuna balls in a single layer, leaving about ½ inch of space between each one. Do not overcrowd — work in batches if necessary. Overcrowding traps steam and prevents browning.

Step 6: Air Fry (10–12 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Air fry at 375°F (190°C) for 10–12 minutes, flipping the balls halfway through cooking (around the 5–6 minute mark). The tuna balls are done when they’re golden brown and crispy on the outside and reach an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C). Cooking times vary by air fryer model, so check at the 10-minute mark.

Step 7: Rest and Serve (2 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Let the tuna balls rest in the basket for 2 minutes before serving — this helps them set and prevents the cheese from burning your mouth. Serve warm with lemon wedges, a sprinkle of fresh parsley, and your favorite keto-friendly dipping sauce.

Recipe Timing & Intensity Summary

Phase	Time	Intensity
Prep & Mixing	15 minutes	Low–Medium
Preheating	2–3 minutes	Low
Air Frying	10–12 minutes	Medium
Resting	2 minutes	Low
Total	25–27 minutes	Easy

Nutrition Information

Per Serving (3 tuna balls):

- Calories: 310 kcal
- Total Fat: 22 g
- Saturated Fat: 6 g
- Cholesterol: 95 mg
- Sodium: 680 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 5 g
- Dietary Fiber: 2 g
- Net Carbs: 3 g
- Protein: 24 g