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Description

Juicy, seasoned meatballs baked to perfection in a rich, savory marinara sauce and blanketed under a thick, bubbly layer of melted mozzarella and parmesan cheese make this Keto Meatball Casserole an ultimate comfort food favorite. Every comforting bite delivers robust Italian flavors while keeping the dish naturally high-protein and low-carb. It requires minimal active prep time, letting your oven do all the work to create a cheesy, bubbly masterpiece that the whole family will request week after week.

Can This Keto Meatball Casserole Support Weight Loss Goals?

Yes, this dish can support weight loss goals because its high protein content promotes strong satiety and helps keep hunger and cravings at bay throughout the day. Protein requires more energy for your body to digest compared to carbohydrates or fats, providing a minor thermogenic boost while helping preserve muscle mass during a calorie deficit. By swapping traditional high-carb breadcrumbs and pasta fillers for protein-dense ingredients, you get a filling meal that fits seamlessly into your daily macro targets.

Does Keto Meatball Casserole Fit a High-Protein Lifestyle?

This Keto Meatball Casserole serves as an exceptional anchor for a high-protein lifestyle, providing roughly 38 grams of protein per serving from lean ground beef, Italian sausage, and melted cheeses. By eliminating sugary sauces, flour, and grain fillers, each generous portion stays at just 6 grams of net carbs while relying on wholesome, satisfying ingredients. You can easily pair it with a side of steamed green vegetables or zucchini noodles to hit your daily nutritional goals without ever feeling deprived.

My Personal Experience

- Browning the meatballs first locks in maximum flavor: Giving the meatballs a quick sear in a skillet before baking creates a savory exterior crust that prevents them from tasting rubbery or turning soggy in the sauce.
- Choosing a zero-sugar marinara makes all the difference: Opting for a low-carb marinara sauce keeps the carbohydrate count remarkably low while maintaining that classic, tangy tomato flavor we all crave in Italian dishes.
- Shredding your own mozzarella creates the best melt: Using freshly grated cheese instead of pre-bagged varieties eliminates anti-caking starches and yields that iconic, stretchy cheese pull every single time.
- Letting it rest before slicing keeps it neat: Allowing the casserole to sit for ten minutes after coming out of the oven helps the melted cheese and sauce set so individual portions hold together beautifully on the plate.

Perfect For

- Keto Diet Plans: Designed with high fats, moderate protein, and minimal carbs to keep your body comfortably in ketosis.
- High-Protein, Low-Carb Dinners: Delivers 38g of protein per serving to support muscle recovery and steady energy levels.
- Weekend Meal Prep: Bakes easily in a single dish and reheats remarkably well for quick,

satisfying weekday lunches.

- Cozy Family Gatherings: Familiar Italian flavors appeal to kids and adults alike, making it a stress-free meal for busy weeknights.

Why You'll Love This Recipe

- Unbeatable cheesy comfort: A double layer of mozzarella and parmesan bubbles up into a golden, golden-brown crust that makes every bite feel like an indulgence.
- Incredibly simple assembly: Mixing up the meatball ingredients and layering everything in a single baking dish takes very little active effort in the kitchen.
- Naturally gluten-free and grain-free: Skips traditional breadcrumbs entirely, making it safe and friendly for those with gluten sensitivities or grain-free preferences.
- Freezer-friendly convenience: You can assemble the entire casserole ahead of time, freeze it unbaked, and pop it straight into the oven on a hectic night.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Overmixing the meatball mixture: Working the ground meat too aggressively causes the meatballs to turn dense and tough instead of tender and juicy.
- Skipping the meatball browning step: Tossing raw meatballs straight into the sauce without searing can make them fall apart and release excess fat into the dish.
- Using marinara sauce with hidden sugars: Forgetting to check the label on store-bought pasta sauce can accidentally spike your carbohydrate intake with added sugars.
- Overbaking the casserole: Leaving the dish in the oven too long past the cheese melting stage can dry out the meatballs and burn the cheese topping.

Required Equipment

- 9×13-Inch Glass or Ceramic Baking Dish — ensures even heat distribution and provides plenty of space to layer meatballs, sauce, and cheese without overflowing.
- Large Mixing Bowl — allows ample room to combine ground meat, seasonings, and binding ingredients evenly without overworking the meat.
- Large Skillet — provides a flat, hot surface to quickly brown the exterior of the meatballs before they go into the oven.
- Measuring Cups and Spoons — guarantees precise portioning of seasonings, cheeses, and marinara sauce for consistent flavor every time.

Storage Instructions

Store leftover casserole in the baking dish tightly covered with foil, or transfer portions into airtight glass or BPA-free plastic containers and refrigerate for up to 4 days. For longer storage, freeze individual cooled portions in freezer-safe containers for up to 2 months, ensuring you press out excess air to prevent freezer burn. Thaw frozen portions overnight in the refrigerator before reheating thoroughly.

Recipe Details

- Preparation Time: 20 minutes
- Cooking Time: 35 minutes
- Total Time: 55 minutes
- Servings: 6 servings
- Best Season for This Recipe: All-season (hearty and comforting for cold winter nights, yet easy to enjoy year-round)

- Total Calories (Per Serving): Approximately 460 kcal (approximate estimate)

Recipe Card Description

Savory Italian meatballs baked in a rich, zero-sugar marinara sauce and blanketed under a thick layer of bubbly melted mozzarella and parmesan cheese. This low-carb casserole delivers comforting homestyle flavor with 38 grams of protein per serving.

 Ingredients

- 1.5 lbs lean ground beef (90/10) *(pats well and keeps excess grease to a minimum)*
- 0.5 lbs Italian pork sausage *(casings removed; adds essential savory spices and moisture)*
- 1 large egg *(lightly beaten to help bind the meatballs together)*
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese *(divided; half for the meatballs, half for the topping)*
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil *(for browning the meatballs)*
- 2 cups low-sugar marinara sauce *(check labels for zero added sugars)*
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Directions

1. Mix the meatball base: In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, Italian sausage, beaten egg, half of the grated Parmesan cheese, minced garlic, Italian seasoning, salt, and black pepper, mixing gently with your hands just until incorporated.

2. Form the meatballs: Roll the meat mixture firmly into uniform golf-ball-sized spheres, yielding about 18 to 20 individual meatballs.

3. Brown the meatballs: Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat, add the meatballs, and sear them on all sides for 5 to 6 minutes until golden brown, ensuring a firm exterior texture (they will finish cooking in the oven).

4. Layer the sauce and meatballs: Spread half of the low-sugar marinara sauce evenly across the bottom of a 9×13-inch baking dish, then arrange the seared meatballs in a single layer over the sauce.

5. Add remaining sauce and cheese: Pour the remaining marinara sauce evenly over the top of the meatballs, then blanket everything generously with the shredded mozzarella cheese and the remaining Parmesan cheese.

6. Bake until bubbly: Bake uncovered in a preheated oven at 375°F (190°C) for 20 to 25 minutes until the sauce is actively bubbling around the edges and the cheese topping is melted, golden brown, and slightly crisp.

7. Rest and serve: Remove from the oven and let the casserole rest for 10 minutes so the internal sauce settles before scooping and serving warm.

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving – Approximate)

- Calories: 460 kcal
- Fats: 31 g
- Cholesterol: 135 mg

- Sodium: 890 mg
- Potassium: 520 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 8 g
- Fiber: 2 g
- Net Carbs: 6 g
- Sugars: 4 g
- Protein: 38 g
- Calcium: 310 mg

Notes

- Storage Tips: Keep leftovers sealed in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days to maintain optimal freshness and food safety.
- Reheating Instructions: Reheat individual portions in the microwave for 90 seconds, or warm an entire portion in a 350°F oven covered with foil for 15 minutes until piping hot.
- Allergy Notes: Contains dairy (mozzarella and parmesan) and eggs; substitute dairy-free cheese alternatives if managing a lactose intolerance or dairy allergy.
- Flavor Boosts: Add a pinch of crushed red pepper flakes into the marinara sauce or garnish with fresh chopped basil right before serving to elevate the Italian flavor profile.