MINI MEATBALL SOUP WITH BROCCOLI & ORECCHIETTE

The little meatballs in this soup are just half-teaspoon bits of Italian sausage that needn’t be rolled or browned before being plopped in. As the meatballs cook, the soup takes on the sausage’s spices. This recipe is adaptable: It calls for carrots & broccoli, but use whatever vegetables you wish. For the pasta, the tiny meatballs fit snugly in orecchiette, but feel free to use your favorite shape.

Ingredients:
Kosher salt & black pepper
3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium carrots, coarsely chopped
1 large head broccoli, stalks & branches peeled & coarsely chopped, head cut into small florets (can substitute other veggies like spinach or kale)
3 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
2 qts. chicken broth
8 oz. orecchiette
1 lb. hot Italian sausage, casings removed
Freshly grated Parmesan, for serving

Directions:
• Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil.
• In a large Dutch oven / heavy pot, heat the oil.
• Add the carrots, broccoli stems & garlic, season with salt & pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally to keep the garlic from scorching, until softened, 3 to 5 min.
• Add the chicken broth & bring to a boil, then reduce heat & simmer until the broth is flavorful, 5 to 7 minutes
• Taste & season with salt & pepper as it simmers.
• Once the broth begins to simmer, add the pasta to the boiling water & cook until al dente.
• Drain the pasta & divide it among bowls.
• While the pasta cooks & the broth simmers, use a 1/2 teaspoon measuring spoon to scoop little sausage meatballs and plop them into the broth. (You can also pinch 1/2-inch pieces of the sausage and roll them between your hands.)
• Return to a boil, add the broccoli florets, then reduce heat & simmer, stirring gently and occasionally, until the sausage is cooked through & the florets are bright green, 5 to 7 minutes.
• Season to taste with salt & pepper.
• Spoon the soup over the orecchiette.
• Finish with Parmesan.

From 2022 Soup & Hope Speaker, Alan Mathios.