

# RACHIELE/TUCCI FAMILY RECIPE

## POLPETTE

### Meatballs

( Makes 4 Servings )

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ten 1-inch-thick slices dried Italian bread | 5 tablespoons finely grated pecorino        |
| 1 pound ground beef                         | Romano cheese                               |
| 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves  | Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper |
| 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped             | Coat the bottom of a pan with olive oil     |
| 1 large egg                                 | Chopped Fresh Basil Leaves, about 3 of them |

Arrange the bread on a cookie sheet and allow it to dry out, uncovered, about 3 days. Place the dried bread in a bowl and cover with warm water. Set aside until the bread softens, about 5 minutes.

In another bowl, combine the meat, parsley, basil, garlic, egg, cheese, and salt and pepper to taste, using your hands to mix the ingredients. Remove and discard the crust from each slice of bread. Squeeze the water out of the bread, and breaking it into small pieces, add it to the meat. Work the bread into the meat until they are equally combined and the mixture holds together like a soft dough.

Warm the olive oil in a large frying pan set over medium-high heat. Scoop out a heaping tablespoon of the meat mixture. Roll it between the palms of your hands to form a ball about 1 ½ inches in diameter. (Meatballs that are being prepared for *timpano* should be very small. Use a ½ teaspoon to scoop out the dough and form it into 1/2-inch balls.) Cook one meatball until well browned on all sides, about 8 minutes. (A meatball that sticks to the pan is not ready to be turned.) Taste the meatball, and if needed, adjust the seasoning of the remaining mixture by adding more cheese or salt and pepper. Proceed to cook the meatballs in small batches. As each batch is completed, remove it to a warmed serving plate. Serve when all the meatballs are cooked.

#### VARIATION:

Meatballs that will be added to ragu' sauce should be slightly undercooked (about 6 minutes), as they will finish cooking in the sauce. Add the meatballs to the ragu' during the last half hour of cooking.

*I have had far too many meatballs that have the consistency of cannon balls. Dried out bread, and quite a bit, is the key!*