



## From the Kitchen of Executive Chef Jessica VanRoo

### Quinoa Zucchini Meatballs in Harissa Sauce

Serves 4

*253 calories per serving*

**Description from Living Well UCI Health Blog: [www.ucihealth.org/blog](http://www.ucihealth.org/blog)**

Go meatless with this delectable dish that delivers big time on health benefits. The meatball base is quinoa, a gluten-free, whole-grain carbohydrate that is considerably higher in fiber than most grains. Better yet, it is also a whole protein source, which means it contains all nine essential amino acids.

Add in zucchini and you are loading up on many essential nutrients, especially vitamin A, which helps support your vision and immune system. This versatile green squash is also extremely low in calories at 17 per cooked cup.

Top these meatless morsels with a sauce made from harissa — a spicy and peppery condiment popular in north Africa — and your guests will be clamoring for more!

Total cost:\$5.49/\$1.37 per serving

#### Ingredients - Harissa Sauce

- 1 14.5 oz. can finely diced tomatoes
- 1-2 tablespoons harissa paste or as desired
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder



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#### Ingredients - Meatballs (about 16)

- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup diced onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup grated fresh zucchini
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 large egg
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup whole wheat breadcrumbs or quick-cook oats

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees, line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Heat oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add onions, garlic and zucchini and cook until onions soften. Remove from heat and cool for at least 10 minutes.
3. Pour onion-zucchini mix in a bowl. Add cooked quinoa, Italian seasoning, tomato paste, egg and breadcrumbs.
4. Mix well and form round tablespoon-size meatballs (makes about 16) and place on baking sheet.
5. Bake for 10 minutes, flip and bake 5 more minutes. Then remove from oven.
6. While meatballs bake, combine all sauce ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking.
7. Serve meatballs in the sauce or with sauce drizzled on top.