

Mortadella Meatloaf

Meatloaf. Here in America, this is nostalgia incarnate. Everyone's got a meatloaf story — your grandmother made it or your lunch lady killed it or no one made it better than Mama. Ketchup or no ketchup, with a side of mashed it's the reigning King of Comfort Food. If you haven't mastered one yet, make this one. The addition of mortadella (when has adding more pork to something ever made it worse?) makes this one so flavorful that you'll never make another version without it. Our optional glaze is made with either orange marmalade or apricot preserves, each of which pairs perfectly with the pistachios in both the mortadella and the extra handful we threw in.

See Cook's Notes on why we soak the bread and grate the onion.

Ingredients

glaze (optional)

5 tablespoons orange marmalade or apricot preserves

1 1/2 teaspoons dry mustard

meatloaf

1 slice sandwich bread, crust removed, torn into 1-inch pieces

1/3 cup whole milk

2 large eggs

1 small onion, grated on the large holes of a box grater

1 carrot, finely grated

2 cloves garlic, finely minced or grated

6 ounces mortadella, minced (1 1/2 cups)

1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 cup shelled roasted, salted pistachios, coarsely chopped

1 1/2 teaspoon (Kosher?) salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 pound ground beef

3/4 pound ground pork

special equipment

One 9-inch-by-5-inch loaf pan

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

for the glaze

In a small bowl, combine the marmalade and mustard. Set aside. Makes about 1/3 cup.

for the meatloaf

In a small bowl, combine the bread and milk and set aside to soak. In a large wide, shallow bowl, whisk the eggs lightly. Add the onion, carrot, garlic, mortadella, parsley, cheese, pistachios, salt and pepper and mix well. Squeeze the soaked bread and leave the milk behind. Add the bread to the bowl and stir once or twice. Crumble the beef and pork into the bowl and gently mix with your hands until just combined. Try not to handle the mixture too much. Transfer the mixture to a 9-inch-by-5-inch loaf pan. Spread the glaze over the meatloaf. Set the meatloaf on a foil-lined baking sheet to catch any spills and bake for 50 to 55 minutes. Check halfway through the baking time, and if there's a lot of fat pooling on the edges of the meatloaf, skim it off with a spoon. Let the meatloaf rest until most of the juices have been absorbed back into the loaf, about 15 minutes, before slicing and serving.

Cook's Notes:

Soaking bread (or crackers or dried breadcrumbs) in milk is an old Italian cooking trick to keep meatballs moist, and it works for meatloaf, too. Be sure to squeeze out the milk; you don't need extra liquid in this meatloaf. Grating the onion keeps the mixture moist as well and encourages the onions to melt into the mixture without adding more texture (a seriously undesirable interruption to an otherwise singularly textured dish). We added finely shredded carrots for sweetness and flavor. Again, shredding allows them to steam when cooking without adding the extra step of sauteeing. If adding other vegetables, you'll want to give them a light sauté first and let them cool before adding them to the meat mixture.

total time: 1 hour 30 minutes (includes 10 minute cooling time)

active prep: 30 min

serves: 4 to 6

makes: one 9-inch loaf

difficulty: easy