

## ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

Prep time: 15 min | Cook time: 35 min | Total time 50 min | 6 servings  
Recommended wine pairing: *J. Rickards Ancestor Zinfandel*

### INGREDIENTS

#### FOR THE MEATBALLS

1 pound ground chicken  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ cup finely diced onion  
1 large egg  
¼ cup Italian seasoned Panko  
bread crumbs  
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
¼ cup chopped Italian flat leaf  
parsley  
salt and pepper, to taste

#### FOR THE SOUP

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 cup diced celery  
1 cup diced onions  
1 cup diced carrots  
8 cups chicken broth or stock  
½ cup of Orzo  
salt and pepper, to taste  
1 (5-ounce) bag baby spinach, roughly  
chopped

### DIRECTIONS

#### MAKE THE MEATBALLS

- 1 Place all of the meatball ingredients in a large bowl. Gently mix until everything is well combined. (hands are best for this) Note: Try not to overwork the meat, as this can make the meatballs tough. If the mixture is too wet and won't hold the shape of a meatball, add more breadcrumbs.
- 2 Roll into mini meatballs (I use a teaspoon measuring spoon to measure them out and get about 54 meatballs). Place the meatballs on a large tray or baking sheet; set aside.
- 3 Preheat oven to 350°. Bake meatballs for 20 minutes to pre-cook a bit.

#### MAKE THE SOUP

- 4 In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the celery, onions, and carrots and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the chicken broth to the pot; bring to a boil.
- 5 Once the broth has come to a boil, gently add the meatballs, one at a time, then give them a gentle stir to make sure they don't stick together. Add the orzo; stir for a few seconds to prevent the pasta from sticking together. Cover partially with a lid and cook at a low boil for 20 minutes or until the pasta is tender and the meatballs are cooked through.
- 6 Turn off the heat. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Add the spinach; stir until wilted.

#### RECIPE NOTES

Serve with grated Parmesan cheese for topping the soup, if desired.

