

FOOD

AJC KITCHEN CURIOUS

'Meatballs' turn humble ingredients into hearty mealBy **Ligaya Figueras**
lfigueras@ajc.com

Resourceful cooks are ever-vigilant about kitchen waste. Stale bread? There's a use for that. Polpette casce e ovo is one of them.

Essentially a dish of meatless meatballs made from stale bread, eggs and cheese, and cooked in a fresh tomato sauce, this peasant plate has its origins in the Abruzzo region of southern Italy, where it sufficed as a second course, when meat wasn't available; these days, you're more apt to see it served as an antipasto offering.

There are a few ways to

make this dish.

Some cooks soak the stale bread in water for a few minutes and then squeeze it dry before combining it into a mash with the eggs and cheese, then shaping the mixture into balls. Some opt not to use the crust of the bread.

The recipe below, from the newly released "Food of the Italian South" by Katie Parla (Clarkson Potter, \$30), calls for cooking the meatballs directly in the fresh tomato sauce. Another option is to fry the balls first in a little olive oil, to give them some browning, and then add them to the sauce. No

matter which way you go, let these dumpling-esque balls simmer in the sauce until they are plump, spongy and tender. The recipe calls for a 15-minute heat treatment. I had better results when I let them sit in the pan for nearly half an hour.

Finally, you can amp up the flavor profile of the sauce with fresh garlic, diced bell pepper or parsley. Check your pantry to see what needs using up. This is a cupboard dinner, after all.

And, if you find yourself richly overstocked with these ingredients, make extra. This poor man's recipe is easily doubled.

STOCK UP | COMPILED BY C. W. CAMERON

3 salsas and relishes to brighten your mealsBy **C. W. Cameron**
For the AJC

Summer's coming. There'll be lots of dinners centered around the grill. Cinco de Mayo will be upon us in no time. Beach vacations await. You've dozens of reasons to pick up some tangy and spicy sauces for dipping and cooking.

**Chimole and corn chips from Sabor Provisions**

If you meet Brenda Saravia of Gainesville-based Sabor Provisions at a local farmers market, she'll be standing behind a tempting array of empanadas, pastelitos and jars of the sauces and relishes that reflect the tastes of her Honduras heritage. One of

her favorites, and now ours, is chimole, a mild relish made from red onions, tomatoes and bell peppers, and bright with cilantro, lemon and cumin. It's used as a sauce with everything from savory pastelitos to fried tostones. While you're at the market, sample the chimole with her fried corn chips, which are unlike any others we've

tried. They're flaky, lightly sweet and pretty darn perfect with the brightness of her sauces.

\$12 per 12-ounce jar. \$5 per 6-ounce bag of corn chips. Available at the Marietta Square, Roswell, Flower Branch, Braselton and Suwanee farmers markets. facebook.com/Saborprovisions.

#Verde salsa from Hopes Salsa

For now, James Lee and Manny Duran of Doraville-based Hopes Salsa are keeping it simple. They make just one salsa, #Verde. It's a refreshing combination of just six ingredients: tomatillos, jalapenos, onions, cilantro, salt and garlic. We found it to be really bright and fresh-tasting, with just the right level of heat. Spoon it into the cavity of an avocado, dollop it on top of your eggs, stir it into your grits, pour it on top of grilled chicken and, yes, scoop it up with chips (they recommend El Milagro). They named the company after Duran's mom, Esperanza. ("Esperanza" is Spanish for "hope.") That's only fitting, since it's her recipe they tweaked and made their own. We hear there's a red salsa in the works, and



an avocado-based version, as well.

\$6 per 16-ounce jar. Available at many farmers markets, including Grant Park, Avondale Estates, Brookhaven,

Green Market at Piedmont Park, Alpharetta and Sandy Springs, or at the Candler Park Market and Grant Park Market. Also available at hopes-salsa.com.

Mole rojo from 100% Salsas

Marco Martinez of Atlanta-based 100% Salsas told us the company's best-selling salsas are salsa roja (red salsa) and salsa verde (green salsa). But, the product he's proudest of? It's his deeply flavored mole rojo. "Mole is our most popular sauce in Mexico," he said. "My great grandmother's recipe has been in our family for many generations. It takes me and my staff about 13 hours to make each batch. One single shortcut, and you can ruin the whole recipe." How could we resist giving it a try? What we discovered is a dark red sauce. Open the container, and you immediately smell



the complex aroma of cocoa and peppers. It's a little bit hot, a little bit bitter. This is not a salsa for scooping. If you're not accustomed to it, mole can be a surprise. But, the rich, smoky flavor would pair perfectly with roasted meats. We're going

to try it with roast chicken and, if there's any left over, we'll serve it with some of 100% Salsas' tamales.

\$4.99 per 8-ounce container. Available at Whole Foods Market and the Marietta Square farmers market. 100artisanfoods.com.

At Pour Taproom, serve yourself from 80-plus taps

Bob Townsend
Beer Town

Set to open in late April on the Atlanta Beltline's Eastside Trail, Pour Taproom neatly defines its concept with the phrase "Pay by the Ounce, Not by the Glass."

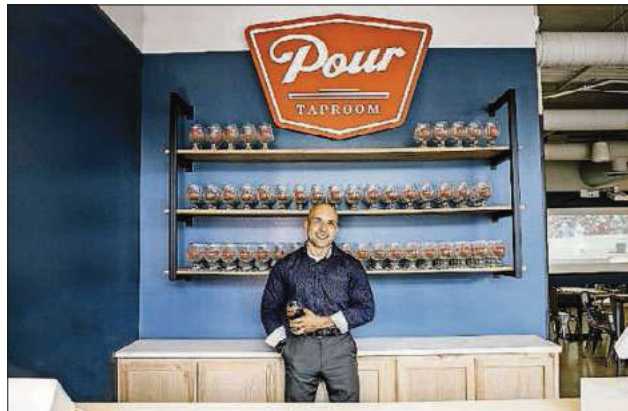
Located next door to Nina & Rafi at SPX Alley, the space is designed to allow guests to sample from 80-plus self-serve taps featuring local and seasonal beers from a potpourri of craft breweries, plus other beverages from wineries and cideries.

Founded by Nate Tomforde, the first Pour Taproom opened in West Asheville, North Carolina, in 2014 with the mission to "support and showcase local craft beer." Now there are eight more locations, mostly in the Southeast.

Recently, Atlanta Pour Taproom owner Ray Ballester, who is a retired Marine, took me on a tour of the build-out, and explained that technology is the key to the process and success of the business.

It starts with the staff greeting guests, checking IDs and taking a form of payment. Then you're given a card with an individual code and a Pour pint glass, plus a run-through of the self-serve system, which is arranged by style sections, such as lagers, IPAs and sours.

From there, you're on your own, and can drink by the ounce in increments up to two pints before checking in with



"People can come here and sample all the cool new stuff in one place," says Atlanta Pour Taproom owner Ray Ballester, shown at the host stand.

CONTRIBUTED BY LAUREN VEREEN / SALUT MEDIA

IF YOU GO

Pour Taproom
661 Auburn Ave. NE., Suite 230, Atlanta.
404-835-2228, atlanta.pourtaproom.com.

a staff member again. In keeping with the tech-savvy Taproom theme, tablets connected to the Untapped networking service display tasting notes and ratings for each beer.

"I went to the Charlotte location and spent some time training with the folks there," Ballester said. "They have about 117 taps there, and they rotate through the entire cooler in about two weeks. So you, as a customer, can have a different experience virtually any time you come in."

"We are the ninth location, and every one is a bit different. What's unique for us is the relationship we have with Nina & Rafi next door. Conveniently enough, in the architectural design, their kitchen is behind the wall at the back of our space. So we built a little roll-up door, which gives us access and lets

them expo pizza and other food items to serve to our guests."

The open layout includes a pair of accordion-style doors that will open to a sidewalk patio and the Beltline beyond. There's seating at custom 12-foot oak and steel bar tables designed by Summit Design Co. And other work-play amenities include built-in charging stations, a giant 130-inch projector screen, six TVs, and games like giant Scrabble.

There's also room for a small kitchen in back that will offer a small plate menu and can be used for catering events.

"We'll be doing a small menu of light items that will basically complement what Nina & Rafi is offering," Ballester said, "but I see this being mostly pizza and beer here."

"With the changes in the beer laws here in Georgia, and all the breweries that are popping up around us in Atlanta, we actually feel that helps our concept out a lot," Ballester said. "People can come here and sample all the cool new stuff in one place. So we're excited about that. And I'm excited to be here."



Polpette Casce e Ovo is a dish of meatless meatballs made from stale bread, eggs and cheese, and cooked in a fresh tomato sauce. This peasant plate has its origins in the Abruzzo region of southern Italy.

LIGAYA FIGUERAS / LFIGUERAS@AJC.COM

are cooked through and slightly firm to the touch, about 15 minutes more. If the sauce gets too thick, add water to the pan as needed, pouring it in at the sides of the pan. Serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 4 to 6 as a starter.

Per serving, based on 4: 388 calories (percent of calories from fat, 47), 19 grams protein, 32 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram fiber, 20 grams fat (1 gram saturated), 287 milligrams cholesterol, 814 milligrams sodium.

Reprinted from "Food of the Italian South." Copyright © 2019 by Katie Parla. Published by Clarkson Potter, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.