

# Zoodles With Vegan Lentil Meatballs (gluten-free, weird-ingredient-free)

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Recipe type: vegan, gluten-free

Prep time: 15 mins    Cook time: 60 mins    Total time: 1 hour 15 mins

Serves: 4 (about 20 no-meatballs)

## Ingredients

### For the lentil "meatballs":

- 2-4 TBSP olive oil, or coconut oil
- ½ small yellow onion, diced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup green lentils ( brown should work fine as well, but green are what I used)
- 2¼ cups water
- ½ tsp. fine-grain sea salt
- ½ cup rolled oats, processed into flour (or ½ cup storebought oat flour -- make sure the oats are gluten-free if you're gluten intolerant)
- 1 TBSP chia seeds, plus ¼ cup water
- 1 tsp. soy sauce OR gluten-free tamari, for those who are gluten intolerant
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp. ground fennel seed
- ¼ tsp. dried thyme
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. chili powder
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt, or as needed
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, finely chopped

### For serving:

- 2-3 large zucchini, spiralized (see recipe notes -- or you can use cooked spaghetti squash, or regular noodle, or any kind of noodle alternative you like)
- your favorite tomato sauce, homemade or store-bought
- Extra fresh chopped parsley, for garnish

## Instructions

1. Rinse the lentils and pick over them to make sure there aren't any stones. Drain, and set aside.
2. Place a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, and saute the onion and garlic in 1-2 TBSP oil for about 5 minutes, or until the onion has started to turn translucent.
3. Add the lentils, water, and ½ tsp. salt, and increase heat to high. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to maintain a slow, gentle simmer. Let cook for about 30 minutes, or until the lentils are tender with just a little bit of chew. If there is still some water left in the pot when they've finished, drain it off in a strainer. If they start to run out of water and aren't tender yet, add a splash more and keep cooking.
4. While the lentils are cooking, process the oats into flour (to make your own, simply add rolled oats to the bowl of your food processor and blend until finely ground), and mix the chia seeds and water together in the bottom of a large mixing bowl.
5. When the lentils are done, place them in the bowl with the chia seeds, and add in the oat flour and all the remaining ingredients except for the parsley and salt. Using a potato masher, mash the mixture until most of the lentils are broken up and the mixture is sticky enough to hold together when rolled into balls. If the mixture isn't quite holding together, you can add a TBSP or so of water to help it, or mash a little longer.
6. Add in the chopped parsley and mix to combine. Taste, and adjust seasoning with more salt or spices if needed.
7. Roll the mixture into "meatballs". I used a rounded TBSP to make them all about the same size, and ended up with a little over 20. You can make them bigger or smaller if you like.
8. Add a couple TBSP oil to a large skillet (I like cast iron for this, but nonstick or stainless will work too) and seer the meatballs on all sides until a nice crust has formed (about 2 minutes per side, over medium-high heat). The meatballs should hold together easily, but they are tender so be gently when turning them. I found a pair of silicone-tipped tongs ([like these](#)) worked perfectly.

9. Serve directly on top of your favorite sauce, or add the sauce to the pan and coat the meatballs before serving. Serve over zucchini noodles, or other noodly alternative. Enjoy!

## Notes

You can keep zucchini noodles raw, or cook them a bit before serving to warm them up and soften them. Either way, I suggest taking this one extra step before serving up your spiralized zucchini: after spiralizing, place the "noodles" into a large strainer or colander, and sprinkle with a bit of kosher salt. Let them sit for 10-15 minutes (you can do this while the no-meatballs cook) and allow them to drain off their excess liquid. Spread on a clean towel and blot gently before piling into bowls (or quickly sauteing in a hot pan, just for a minute or two) and then serving. This will help prevent a watery soup from happening in the bottom of your bowl.

And because I know some of you are going to ask, [this is the spiralizer I use](#). I've had it for a couple years now, and have been very happy with it so far. It makes quick zoodle dishes and clean up a breeze.

Recipe by Will Cook For Friends at <https://www.willcookforfriends.com/2017/01/zoodles-with-vegan-lentil-meatballs.html>