

The Lean, Mean Meatloaf Machine

**A Handbook for Making Fun, Healthy Meatloaves
that Your Family will Love**



Dennis Weaver
The Prepared Pantry

Welcome to an exciting new world of meatloaves . . .



How long since you've used "meatloaf" and "exciting" in the same sentence? How about "meatloaf" and "healthy" in the same sentence?

We're not making plain old meatloaf here. We're talking about meatloaves

good enough for company and fun meatloaves like pizza meatloaf and cheeseburger meatloaf.

Meatloaf is back—leaner, more fun, and tastier than ever. You can have a ball designing your own meatloaves or use one of our recipes. Or you can convert your favorite recipes to lean meatloaf recipes.

What makes a lean meatloaf? We're using lean meatloaf pans, perforated pans that allow the grease to drip through into a catch pan below. These make lower fat, healthier, guilt-free meatloaves. We're making these into mini-meatloaves, just right for individual servings--but you can also make lean meatloaves in traditional loaves.

We think you'll have fun with your new lean meatloaves. We'll tell you how to make them and give you fun recipes to get you started.

Oh, and by the way, you can save a bunch of money making lean meatloaves. Burger is the cheapest cut of meat and when you mix bread crumbs or rolled oats into the meat, it stretches your money even farther.

Thanks for joining us.

Dennis Weaver

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What's a Lean Machine Meatloaf?

You've heard the phrase, "lean, mean, fighting machine." I don't know that it has ever been applied to a meatloaf before but if you want to get into fighting shape, eat lean meatloaves, not traditional ones.

A lean meatloaf is one with much of the fat removed. Fat melts in the heat of the oven. In a traditional meatloaf, the fat collects in the pan. The meatloaf cooks in its own fat absorbing the molten fat during the whole baking time.

My mother made meatloaves regularly when we were kids. It seemed we were always on a budget and meatloaf fit the budget. I'd watch her when she took the meatloaf from the oven, tip the pan up, and pour hot grease from the pan. But she only got part of the grease. Much more remained, trapped in the loaf.

We now use perforated pans with "catch" pans below. It's really slick. You drain a lot more hot fat from the meatloaf through perforated holes than from pouring.

Since lean meatloaves have much of the fat removed, they are healthier, less greasy, and better tasting.

How to Convert Any Meatloaf to a Lean Machine Meatloaf

There are tons of interesting meatloaf recipes. Can you convert them into lean meatloaves? Can you make mini meatloaves from a traditional recipe?

With holes in the bottom of the pan to let the fat drain as it melts, lean meatloaves turn out very differently. They're drier and more crumbly. We tried compensating by reducing the filler--the bread crumbs or rolled oats--and by adding fat-free yogurt. Both worked but what worked even better was simply adding another egg to the recipe. The egg gives the meatloaf structure and helps hold it together.

So to convert a standard meatloaf recipe to a lean meatloaf recipe, simply add another egg.

To convert a standard meatloaf to a mini meatloaf, in addition to adding the egg, we reduced the baking time. When we piled the meat high to make nice rounded domes, our meatloaves took about 35 minutes to bake to 165 degrees. (You save quite a bit of baking time making mini meatloaves.) We checked doneness with an [insta-read thermometer](http://www.preparedpantry.com/professional-insta-read-kitchen-thermometer-cdn.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/professional-insta-read-kitchen-thermometer-cdn.aspx>)

Most standard meatloaf recipes yield eight individual meatloaves the size of muffins with nicely rounded domes. If this is more servings than you need for your meal, simply wrap the extras and freeze them.

The Pans

In our store, we now carry two lean meatloaf pans: [a standard pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/lean-meat-loaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/lean-meat-loaf-pan.aspx>) and [a mini meatloaf pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>). We tested both. The standard pan is the size of a bread pan and actually two pans in one. The top pan is perforated to let the melted fat drip through. The lower pan catches the drippings. The lower pan can also be used as a nonstick bread pan.

The mini meatloaf pan is like two 6-cup muffin pans. Again the top pan is perforated and the lower pan catches the drippings.

If you want to make muffins or cupcakes, simply use paper liners to make a dozen muffins. The meatloaf pan is particularly useful as a supplement to your main muffin pan. When your recipe makes more than a dozen muffins or cupcakes, make the extras in your mini meatloaf pan.

The Recipes

We started this project by taking standard, traditional meatloaf recipes and converting them to lean meatloaves. In each case, we added an extra egg. Then we tackled fun, interesting meatloaves like a turkey, spinach, and parmesan meatloaf that is classy enough and good enough for company. We followed with more fun recipes like a cheeseburger meatloaf and a sweet and sour meatloaf.

These are the recipes that we recommend:

Golden Acres Stand-in-Line Deluxe Cheeseburger Mini Meatloaves

These cheeseburger mini-meatloaves are worth standing in line for! (And order a side of fries to go with it.)

If your kids like going to burger places with playgrounds, they'll have fun with these mini meatloaves. They're fun to make, fun to serve, and really very good. They're made with ketchup and mustard and a layer of cheese.

Ingredients

1/4 cup ketchup
2 large eggs
1/4 cup [Panko bread crumbs](http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx)
(<http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx>) or other type of bread crumbs
1/3 cup chopped onion
1 pound lean ground beef
2 teaspoons prepared mustard
2 – 3 teaspoons dill pickle relish
1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1/4 cup ketchup
tomato slices (optional)
1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Directions

1. In a bowl, combine the first 1/4 cup ketchup, eggs, bread crumbs, onion and ground beef. Mix ingredients well.
2. Using the [mini meatloaf pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>) with drain holes, fill six cups 1/2 full with mixture.
3. To make the “cheeseburger filling”, spoon the remaining 1/4 cup ketchup, the mustard, dill pickle relish and the first 1/4 cup shredded cheese evenly between the six meatloaf patties.
4. Divide the remaining meat mixture over the “cheeseburger filling”, mounding it above the pan. Place the meat filled pan into the catch pan to catch the droppings during cooking.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Top with remaining shredded cheese and return it to the oven for five minutes or until it reaches 160 degrees. Let the meatloaves stand five minutes in the pan before removing them. Serve with optional tomato slices.

Jiggly Wiggly's Very First Mini Meatloaf Recipe

All across the South, these original mini meatloaves are famous. And they should be. I'd drive to town for them. They're just good old-fashioned food, classic meatloaves in individual servings.

(And in the South, you can get all these ingredients at a Piggly Wiggly grocery store.)

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef or turkey
3/4 cup oatmeal, old-fashioned or quick
3/4 cup finely chopped onion
3/4 cup chopped red pepper
1/2 cup ketchup
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 cloves garlic
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper



Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

1. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients together thoroughly.
2. Using the [Lean Mini Meatloaf Pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>) with drain holes, pack and form about 1 cup of meat mixture into each cup. The recipe should fill eight cavities in your pan. Place the meat filled pan into the second pan to catch any fat drippings that may occur as it is cooking.
3. Bake for 35 minutes or until it reaches 160 degrees for beef and 170 degrees for turkey. Let stand for 5 minutes in pan.

Charlie Cheddar's Real Deal Pizza Mini Meatloaves

I'll be darned. Charlie is right. These really are the real deal. They taste like pizza! But then, they're made with pizza fixings so they should taste like pizza.

If you—or your kids—like pizza, you really should try this easy recipe.

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds of lean ground beef
2 large eggs
1 6-ounce can of tomato paste
1/2 cup bread crumbs ([Panko bread crumbs \(http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx\)](http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx) work great.)
1 can olives, chopped
3/4 cup chopped red pepper
1 teaspoon [Zesty Pizza and Pasta Spice \(http://www.preparedpantry.com/zesty-pizza-and-pasta-spice.aspx\)](http://www.preparedpantry.com/zesty-pizza-and-pasta-spice.aspx) or other pizza spice blend
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
4-6 sliced or chopped cherry tomatoes
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
pinch [Zesty Pizza and Pasta Spice \(http://www.preparedpantry.com/zesty-pizza-and-pasta-spice.aspx\)](http://www.preparedpantry.com/zesty-pizza-and-pasta-spice.aspx) or other pizza spice blend (optional)



Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Mix the ground beef with the eggs, tomato paste and bread crumbs. Add the peppers to the mixture, reserving three tablespoons for the topping.
2. Reserve one tablespoon of olives for topping and add the remaining olives to the meat mixture.
3. To finish the mixture, add the one teaspoon Zesty Pizza and Pastry Spice, parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper. Blend well.
4. Using the [Lean Mini Meatloaf Pan \(http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx\)](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) with drain holes, fill each cup with approximately one cup of meat mixture. Place the meat filled pan into the second pan to catch any grease drippings that occur during cooking.
5. Combine the remaining red peppers, olives, tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, and optional Zesty Pizza and Pastry Spice. Toss mixture and set aside.
6. Bake the meatloaf for 30 minutes. Top with the set aside mozzarella cheese mixture and cook for five more minutes or until temperature reaches 160 degrees.

This recipe will yield eight nice-sized mini meatloaves.

Turkey-in-the-Olive-Garden Mini Meatloaves

There are no olives in this recipe! But there is a tablespoon olive oil. Close enough. But it's still a very good turkey meatloaf recipe—good enough to be served in a famous restaurant and good enough to be served at a dinner party. Oh, and it does have some baby spinach leaves in it. Try this recipe.

Ingredients

1/4 cup bread crumbs (Try our [Panko bread crumbs](http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx)
(<http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx>)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
6 oz. bag baby spinach leaves
1 pound ground turkey
2 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg



Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until soft. Add the spinach and stir until it is just wilted.
2. Transfer the sautéed vegetables to a large bowl and add the bread crumbs and ground turkey. Stir. Add the cheese, eggs, salt, pepper, and nutmeg to the mixture and mix well.
3. Place approximately one cup of the mixture into the [Lean Mini Meatloaf Pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>) with drain holes. Place meat filled pan into second pan to catch any grease drippings that may occur.
4. Bake for approximately 35 minutes or until temperature reaches 170 degrees. Let stand in pan for 5 minutes before serving.

This recipe makes six individual meatloaves.

Taco Bill's Out-of-the-Box Mini Meatloaf Recipe

Ol' Bill really did think out-of-the-box on this one! Meatloaf recipes always have a filler, usually rolled oats or bread crumbs. This one has crushed nacho cheese chips. Clever. It really does make them taste like a taco.

Ingredients

1 pound lean ground beef
1 1/2 Tablespoons [Mexican and Taco Seasoning](http://www.preparedpantry.com/south-of-the-border-mexican-and-taco-seasoning-large-family-size-1.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/south-of-the-border-mexican-and-taco-seasoning-large-family-size-1.aspx>) or equal
1/2 cup salsa
2 eggs
1/2 of an 11.5 ounce bag of nacho cheese corn chips
1 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
1 can olives sliced or chopped
1 sm. Can diced green chili peppers
1 sm. Chopped onion



Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Combine the ground beef, taco seasoning, salsa and eggs.
2. Crush the corn chips to 1/2-inch pieces. Add the chips, cheese, salt, pepper, olives, chili peppers, and onions to the meat mixture. Mix well.
3. Using the [Lean Mini Meatloaf Pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>) with drain holes, pack and form about one cup of meat mixture into the cups. Place the meat filled pan over the second pan to catch any grease drippings that may occur as it is cooking.
4. Bake for 35 minutes or until it reaches 160 degrees. Let stand for 5 minutes in pan.

This recipe makes ten nice-sized mini meatloaves.

General Sounder's Thanksgiving Time Mini Meatloaf Recipe

Even General Sounder eats turkey at Thanksgiving time. These are made with all the fixings: cranberries, seasoning, and stuffing mix. (You can always leave the cranberries out.)

Don't wait until Thanksgiving time to make these meatloaves.

Ingredients

1/4 cup [dried cranberries](http://www.preparedpantry.com/northwoods-cranberries-nine-ounce.aspx)
(<http://www.preparedpantry.com/northwoods-cranberries-nine-ounce.aspx>)
1 pound ground turkey
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1/2 medium onion
1/2 tablespoon poultry seasoning
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 cup chicken stock
1 cup stuffing mix



Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. In a bowl, mix the stuffing and chicken stock. Let the stuffing sit until the broth has been absorbed by the stuffing.
2. In a large bowl, combine the cranberries, turkey, celery, onion, poultry seasoning, eggs, salt, and pepper.
3. When the stuffing mixture is ready, add it to the meat mixture and mix thoroughly.
4. Using the [Lean Mini Meatloaf Pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>) with drain holes, pack and form about one cup of meat mixture into the cups. Place the meat filled pan over the second pan to catch any grease drippings that may occur as it is cooking.
5. Bake for 35 minutes or until it reaches 170 degrees. Let stand for 5 minutes in pan.

This recipe yields eight nice-sized individual servings.

Panda Bear's Kung Fu Mini Meatloaf Recipe

Even the bear loves these sweet and sour mini meatloaves! We topped them with [Thai Sweet Chili Sauce](http://www.preparedpantry.com/thai-sweet-chili-sauce.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/thai-sweet-chili-sauce.aspx>). But then, I'm addicted to Thai Sweet Chili Sauce and put it on anything but my morning cereal. You can use any sweet and sour or other Asian sauce you like. (Our [Mandarin Orange Sauce](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mandarin-orange-sauce.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mandarin-orange-sauce.aspx>) is really good.)

This is really an adaptation of our sort of [famous egg roll recipe](http://www.preparedpantry.com/Chinese-Egg-Rolls-Recipe.htm) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/Chinese-Egg-Rolls-Recipe.htm>). But without the frying, it's easier. If you like egg rolls, you'll love this recipe. It sure took the bear out of me.

This recipe calls for egg roll wrappers cut to size and placed on the meatloaves. You can omit the wrappers if you like.



Ingredients

1 pound ground beef
2 eggs
1/4 cup [Panko bread crumbs](http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/panko-japanese-bread-crumbs.aspx>) or equal
1/2 teaspoon dry [ground ginger](http://www.preparedpantry.com/ginger-gingerbread-recipe.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/ginger-gingerbread-recipe.aspx>)
3/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups cabbage, finely shredded
1/2 medium onion
2-3 stalks of celery, finely chopped
1 tablespoon Hoisin sauce
1 tablespoon soy sauce
8 round egg roll wrappers, about 3 inches in diameter
olive oil to brush on egg roll wrappers
[Thai Sweet Chili Sauce](http://www.preparedpantry.com/thai-sweet-chili-sauce.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/thai-sweet-chili-sauce.aspx>) for a topping

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. In a large bowl, mix the ground beef, bread crumbs, ginger, salt, cabbage, onion, celery, hoisin sauce, and soy sauce. Mix thoroughly.
2. Using the [Lean Mini Meatloaf Pan](http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/mini-meatloaf-pan.aspx>) with drain holes, pack and form about one cup of meat mixture into the cups. Place the meat filled pan over the second pan to catch any grease drippings that may occur as it is cooking.
3. Place an egg roll wrapper on top of each meatloaf and brush with olive oil.
4. Bake for 35 minutes or until it reaches 160 degrees. Let stand for 5 minutes in pan.
5. Remove from pan and drizzle with [Thai Sweet Chili Sauce](http://www.preparedpantry.com/thai-sweet-chili-sauce.aspx) (<http://www.preparedpantry.com/thai-sweet-chili-sauce.aspx>) or other sauce.

This recipe makes eight individual meatloaves.