

Italian Sausage and Cheese Bake

Serves 5 - 6



Steps

1. In a large pot, bring four-quarts of water to a rolling boil. Generously salt the water before adding in the pasta. Boil for 6 minutes. *You do not want to cook the pasta to al dente as it will “cook” again in the oven. Drain after six minutes and place pasta in large lasagna pan.

2. **Preheat oven to 350°F.** In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat begin browning the sausage, making sure you are breaking up the large pieces. Once sausage is cooked, drain fat. Return the heat to medium-high and add the onions and garlic. Stir continuously so as not to burn the mixture. Onions should be golden brown. Add the mushrooms, again stirring continuously. Try to cook off most of the moisture released from the mushrooms. Add the flour, stirring well and cooking it for a few minutes.

3. Begin pouring in the chicken stock, super slowly, stirring constantly. Make sure it's being absorbed as you continue to add the rest. Scrape up all the browned bits from the sides and the bottom of the pan as you do so. That's great flavor!

4. Add the canned tomatoes, again, stirring constantly. Now add the cream. Season with salt, black pepper and red pepper flakes. Simmer for a few minutes before removing great heat. Pour mixture over the cooked penne in the pan. Using a spatula or spoon, stir the sauce over the noodles. Add the shredded cheese, stirring well to incorporate. Top with parmesan cheese.

5. Bake for 25ish minutes or until the cheese is melted, the sides are golden brown and the sauce bubbles a bit. Serve hot.

Ingredients

- 1 pound penne or rigatoni pasta
- 1 pound bulk Italian sausage (or uncooked link, casings removed)
- ½ brown onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound crimini mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 can petite diced tomatoes
- ¾ cup chicken stock
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Start with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper *but taste to see if it needs more
- Couple pinches red pepper flakes
- 1 ½ cups shredded Italian cheeses (mozzarella, provolone, fontina)
- ½ cup parmesan cheese