

One-Pan Creamy Penne with Spinach and Italian Sausage - Effortless and Delicious Comfort

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TIME
5-7 min

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INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 lb ground Italian sausage (mild or hot, casing removed if links)
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
4 cups chicken broth or vegetable broth (low sodium recommended)
1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
1/2 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
12 ounces penne pasta, uncooked
5-6 ounces fresh baby spinach
1/2 cup heavy cream (or half-and-half)
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
Optional Garnish: Fresh basil or parsley

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's get this delicious one-pan meal cooking!
2. **Brown : Sausage:** In a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven (with a tight-fitting lid), heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the ground Italian sausage and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until it's fully browned. Drain any excess grease.
3. **SautØ Aromatics:** Add the chopped onion to the skillet with the sausage. Cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.
4. **Add : Tomatoes & Seasonings:** Stir in the undrained diced tomatoes, chicken or vegetable broth, dried Italian seasoning, salt, and black pepper. Stir well to combine, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan.
5. **Add : Pasta:** Stir in the uncooked penne pasta. Make sure all the pasta is submerged in the liquid.
6. **Simmer & : Cook Pasta:** Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover the skillet tightly, and simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the pasta is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.
7. **Add : Spinach & Cream:** Once the pasta is tender, stir in the fresh baby spinach, a handful at a time, allowing it to wilt down before adding more. Once all spinach is wilted, stir in the heavy cream (or half-and-half) and 1/2 cup of the grated Parmesan cheese. Stir until the cheese is melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy. Bring the soup back to a gentle simmer (do not boil rapidly once dairy is added).

8. Serve: Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Ladle into bowls, garnish with extra grated Parmesan cheese and fresh basil or parsley if desired. Serve hot directly from the pan.

SWAPS & NOTES

Italian Sausage: Use your favorite type of Italian sausage - mild for a classic flavor, or hot for a bit of a kick.

If using links, remove the casing before browning.

Ground turkey or chicken sausage can also be used.

Pasta: Penne pasta is ideal for this recipe as its tubular shape holds the creamy sauce beautifully and it cooks well in one pan.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Pre-Cook Pasta: The magic of a one-pan pasta is that the pasta cooks directly in the sauce, absorbing flavor and releasing starches that thicken the sauce.

Brown Sausage Well: Proper browning adds a crucial depth of flavor to the entire dish.

Stir Occasionally: While the pasta is simmering, give it a stir every few minutes to prevent sticking to the bottom of the pan and ensure even cooking.

Don't Overcook Pasta: Penne will be tender but should still have a slight bite.

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