

Little Shells with Greens & Sausage: A Hearty & Flavorful Weeknight Meal

Little Shells with Greens & Sausage



TIME

8-10 min

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ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 pound Italian sausage (mild or hot, casings removed)
 1 large onion, chopped
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for heat)
 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
 1 bunch (about 1 pound) collard greens, kale, or Swiss chard, stems removed and chopped
 12 ounces small pasta shells (conchigliette) or ditalini
 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Brown the : Sausage:** In a large Dutch oven or a deep, heavy-bottomed pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the Italian sausage (casings removed) and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until it's browned and cooked through, about 8-10 minutes. Drain off any excess fat, leaving about 1 tablespoon in the pot.
- 2. Saut  Aromatics:** Add the chopped onion to the pot and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the minced garlic and red pepper flakes (if using) and cook for another minute until fragrant.
- 3. Add : Liquids & Tomatoes:** Pour in the chicken broth and diced tomatoes (undrained). Bring the mixture to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot.
- 4. Add : Greens:** Stir in the chopped collard greens (or kale/chard). They will look like a lot at first, but they will wilt down significantly. Bring the mixture back to a simmer.
- 5. Cook : Pasta:** Add the small pasta shells to the simmering liquid. Stir well to ensure the pasta is submerged. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and cook for 10-12 minutes, or according to package directions, until the pasta is al dente and most of the liquid has been absorbed. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.
- 6. Finish & : Serve:** Remove the pot from the heat. Stir in the grated Parmesan cheese until melted and creamy. Taste and season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper as needed. Serve hot, with extra Parmesan cheese for sprinkling.

SWAPS & NOTES

Sausage: Feel free to use mild Italian sausage if you prefer less heat, or hot Italian sausage for a kick.

Ground turkey or chicken sausage can also be excellent, healthier alternatives.

For a vegetarian version, use a plant-based sausage and vegetable broth.

Greens: Collard greens are traditional, but kale or Swiss chard work wonderfully too.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overcook Pasta: Keep an eye on the pasta.

You want it al dente (firm to the bite) so it doesn't get mushy in the sauce.

Stir Often: Especially after adding the pasta, stir occasionally to prevent the shells from sticking to the bottom of the pot.

Season as You Go: Taste and adjust seasoning throughout the cooking process, especially after adding the broth and at the very end.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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