



Photo: Mitch Mandel

Individual Sausage-Rigatoni Bake

From *“The Biggest Loser Cookbook”*

I grew up eating sausage and peppers and tons of other sausage-infused Italian favorites. When I started dieting, I thought I had to say good-bye to sausage forever. But later I figured out that I could season the leanest cut of pork just like sweet Italian sausage. Now I eat it all of the time as long as I make it myself . . . and you can, too!

Sausage

- 3 ounces extra-lean ground pork
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon red-pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- Pinch of salt

Rigatoni and Sauce

- 3/4 cup whole-wheat rigatoni
- 2/3 cup thin, 1"-long red or yellow bell pepper strips
- 1 cup canned crushed tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon no-salt-added tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons grated reduced-fat Parmesan cheese



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Preheat the oven to 400°F.

To prepare the sausage: Combine the pork, fennel seeds, parsley, pepper flakes, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and salt. With clean hands or a fork, mix well.

Place a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until it is hot enough for a spritz of water to sizzle on it. With an oven mitt, briefly remove the pan from the heat to lightly mist with olive oil spray.

Add the sausage to the pan. Cook, breaking it into large chunks with a wooden spoon, for 3 to 5 minutes, or until no longer pink. Remove from the pan and cover to keep warm.

To prepare the rigatoni and sauce: Lightly mist a 2- to 3-cup baking dish with olive oil spray. Set aside.

Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, return the skillet to the heat, add the pepper strips, and cook 3 to 5 minutes until tender. Add the reserved sausage. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, water, oregano, honey, and garlic powder. Stir to mix well. Add the reserved pasta. Transfer to the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle evenly with the cheese. Cover with aluminum foil.

Bake for 10 minutes. Remove the aluminum foil. Bake for 5 minutes, or until heated through and the top is starting to brown. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Makes 1 serving

Per serving: 427 calories, 30 g protein, 66 g carbohydrates, 7 g fat (1 g saturated), 60 mg cholesterol, 12 g fiber, 629 mg sodium