



Rustic Italian Sausage Minestrone

Makes: 12 servings

Prep Time: 30 minutes Cook Time: 50 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour & 20 minutes

Ingredients

For the Soup:

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 pound Italian sausage, bulk
- 1 large sweet onion, diced
- 1 large yellow bell pepper, diced
- 2 medium celery stalks, diced
- 6 medium garlic cloves, finely minced
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 4 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed fire-roasted tomatoes
- 6–8 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 medium carrots, diced
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can navy or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (7-ounce) jar roasted red peppers, diced, liquid reserved
- 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 medium bay leaves
- 1/4 cup pesto
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 3/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste

To Finish:

- 1 cup ditalini, acini de pepe or other small pasta
- 1/2 cup finely chopped Italian parsley

For Serving:

- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Fresh rosemary, optional

Instructions

Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the Italian sausage and let it brown undisturbed for 3–5 minutes. Stir, breaking it into small pieces, and continue cooking until browned. Transfer to a plate and set aside. If there is more than 2 tbsp of fat in the pot, remove the excess.

Add the onion, bell pepper, and celery to the pot. Cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring and scraping up the browned bits from the bottom. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds.

Stir in the tomato paste and Italian seasoning. Cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring frequently, until the tomato paste darkens slightly.

Add the crushed tomatoes, 6 cups of chicken broth, carrots, both kinds of beans, roasted red peppers and their reserved liquid, rosemary, bay leaves, pesto, brown sugar, baking soda, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer gently for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. The soup may foam briefly when the baking soda is added. This is normal.

Stir in the acini de pepe and reserved sausage. Cook for 8–10 minutes, or until the pasta is al dente. Add more broth as needed to reach your preferred consistency.

Remove the bay leaves and stir in the parsley. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Ladle into bowls and top with freshly grated Parmesan and a little fresh rosemary, if desired.

Chef's Notes:

- Acini de pepe is especially good in this soup because it holds its texture well. Ditalini, tubettini, or orzo can be substituted, although they may absorb more broth.
- For a lower-carbohydrate or gluten-free version, simply omit the pasta.
- The soup freezes well, including with the acini de pepe. Allow it to cool before transferring to airtight containers.
- Refrigerate leftovers for up to 4 days. The pasta will absorb some broth as the soup sits, so add extra broth when reheating if needed.