

TUSCAN SAUSAGES

Makes about 4 pounds (1.8kg) of sausage links.
By Dennis W. Viau; modified from several recipes.

These Tuscan Sausages benefit from the flavor influence of Northern Italy rather than Southern Italy, the foods of which are often influenced by the cuisine of Northern Africa; therefore you find more herbs used rather than chile peppers. One ingredient that makes these sausages unique is the sun-dried tomatoes. Although these sausages are mild, you can make them spicy by adding cayenne.



Ingredients:

2 to 3 medium hog casings
3½ pounds (1.6kg) pork butt or fatty pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch (2.5cm) cubes and soft frozen
½ cup (3½ oz. / 100g) chopped sun-dried tomatoes
4 anchovy filets
¼ cup (60ml) dry red wine
1 tablespoon dry basil
2 teaspoons dry oregano
1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
⅛ teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Prepare the hog casings by rinsing the well and then soaking in clean cold water for 30 to 45 minutes. Rinse again and run plenty of water through the casings to rinse the inside.

To prepare the pork for grinding, cut it into 1-inch (2.5cm) cubes. Placing it in the freezer for 15 to 20 minutes will help it pass through the grinder better. Grind the pork with a medium (8mm) plate, then refrigerate the ground meat while you prepare the spices.

Combine the wine and seasonings in a large bowl. Add the ground meat, chopped sun-dried tomatoes and anchovy fillets. Gently mix thoroughly with your hands. Wear a rubber glove if you want to keep the fragrance of the spices out of your skin. Don't crush the meat with your hands, just mix gently for a few minutes until the seasonings are thoroughly and evenly distributed.

Cover the bowl and refrigerate 2 to 3 hours to let the seasonings flavor the meat. Or refrigerate overnight.

Carefully thread the casing onto your grinder's sausage tube, leaving about an inch hanging off the end of the tube. This can be made easier by running a little olive oil through the inside of the casing before threading it onto the stuffer tube. Start pushing the seasoned meat through the grinder and stop when the meat starts to enter the casing. Tie the casing closed with a piece of kitchen twine, pushing out any excess air.

Continue stuffing the casing(s), filling each casing to a smooth rounded shape without filling it so much that the skin bursts. When you get to the end, tie it off with another piece of string.

To shape links, squeeze the filling casing in two places about 5 inches (13cm) apart and twist the link in between a couple times. Pierce air pockets with a pin to squeeze excess air as you continue shaping links.

Refrigerate an hour or two to let the meat rest, then cut and cook, cooking the sausages thoroughly. They can be refrigerated up to 2 days. For longer storage, freeze them.

The step-by-step photos were removed. See the video for the preparation.