



Christmas Chicken Sausage Pasta Bake

My Cozy Kitchen Secret

I have a little secret for busy nights. This pasta bake is my hero. It feels like a hug in a dish. I love how the whole house smells like garlic and herbs. Doesn't that smell amazing?

It mixes up fast with simple things. You probably have most of them already. That matters because good food should be easy. It should not make you tired before you even eat.

A Story About Sausage

I first made this for my grandson, Leo. He said he did not like "green

things.” So I showed him how spinach wilts into the red sauce. It just disappears! He ate two big plates.

I still laugh at that. Now he asks for the “hidden green pasta.” What’s a food trick that worked for your family? I would love to hear it.

Why The Little Steps Matter

Let’s talk about the onions and garlic. Please cook them until they are soft. This is not a step to rush. It makes the sauce taste sweet and deep, not sharp.

And that bit of honey? It is magic. It balances the tomatoes perfectly. *Fun fact: tomatoes are actually a fruit!* That’s why a touch of sweet friend makes them sing.

Putting It All Together

Now for the fun part. Stir everything in that big skillet. The red sauce, the pasta, the sausage. Then cover it all with a blanket of cheese.

The oven does the last bit of work. You get ten minutes to set the table. Do you like your cheese bubbly or golden brown? I’m team golden brown myself.

Make It Your Own

This recipe is like a favorite sweater. You can change it to fit you just right. No spinach? Try chopped zucchini. Use any pasta shape you love.

That matters because cooking is about joy, not rules. What is one ingredient you always add to make a dish yours? Tell me in the comments.

You can even skip the baking. Just stir the cheese into the hot pasta. It will melt into a gooey, wonderful sauce. Both ways are just right.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
For the Marinara Sauce:		
Olive oil	1 1/2 tablespoons	
Red onions, diced	1 1/2 cups (180g)	
Garlic, minced	2 cloves	
Crushed tomatoes	1 (28-ounce) can (795g)	
Honey or granulated sugar	1 tablespoon	
Fresh parsley, chopped	1/4 cup (5g)	
Fresh basil, chopped	1/4 cup (5g)	
Dried oregano	1 teaspoon	
Salt	to taste	
For the Pasta:		
Penne pasta	8 ounces (225g)	Use gluten-free pasta if needed
Olive oil	1 1/2 tablespoons	
Chicken sausage	1 pound (450g)	Cut into bite-sized pieces; ensure gluten-free if needed
Baby spinach	4 to 6 cups (100–150g)	
Mozzarella cheese, shredded	1 1/2 cups (140g)	
Parsley, chopped (for garnish)	for garnish	
Salt and pepper	to taste	



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Instructions

Step 1: First, let's wake up your sauce. Warm the oil in your big pan. Cook the onions until they look soft and friendly. Now add the garlic. Doesn't that smell amazing? It only needs 30 seconds to sing. (Tip: Don't let the garlic turn brown. It gets bitter!)

See also [Velvet Evergreen Christmas Soup](#)

Step 2: Pour in your crushed tomatoes. Let the pot get all bubbly for a minute. Then turn the heat down low. Let it gently simmer for five to seven minutes. Stir it now and then. This makes the flavor cozy.

Step 3: Stir in the honey, parsley, basil, and oregano. The honey is my little secret. It makes the tomatoes taste just right. Give it one more minute on the heat. Then add salt until it tastes happy to you. Turn off the burner and smile.

Step 4: Now, cook your pasta in salty boiling water. Cook it until it's just tender. Drain it and give it a quick cold rinse. This stops the cooking. I still laugh at the time I forgot this step. The pasta kept cooking and got too soft!

Step 5: Let's cook the sausage. Heat oil in another pan. Add the chicken sausage pieces. Cook them until they are browned and cooked through. This should take five to seven minutes. **What's your favorite type of sausage to use? Share below!**

Step 6: Pour your beautiful sauce into the pan with the sausage. Warm it together for a minute. Now add all that fresh spinach. Gently fold it in. Watch the spinach wilt down in seconds. It's like magic in your pan.

Step 7: Time to bring the family together. Add your cooked pasta to the saucy pan. Stir until everyone is coated. Now, sprinkle all that mozzarella cheese on top. (Tip: For extra crispy cheese, bake it in a hot oven!)

Step 8: Bake your creation for 10 to 12 minutes. You want the cheese melted and bubbly. See those golden edges? That's perfection. You can skip baking and just stir the cheese in. Both ways are delicious.

Step 9: Take your bake from the oven. Be careful, the handle is hot! Sprinkle on some fresh parsley for a pop of green. Let it sit for just a minute. Then scoop it into bowls. Dinner is served, my dear.

Creative Twists

This recipe loves to play dress-up. Try a new version next time. It keeps things fun in the kitchen.

Swap the spinach for chopped kale. It adds a nice, hearty chew.

Use spicy chicken sausage. It gives the whole dish a warm, happy kick.

Add a cup of ricotta cheese. Dollop it on top before baking for creaminess.

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This pasta bake is a full meal by itself. But I love adding a little something extra. A simple green salad with a lemony dressing is perfect. Some garlic bread is always a winner too. For a pretty plate, serve it in a shallow bowl.

See also [Lemon Ginger Sparkle Cookies](#)

What to drink? A chilled glass of Pinot Noir wine pairs nicely. For a non-alcoholic treat, try sparkling apple cider. It feels festive. Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Cozy Bake for Later

Let's talk about saving some for tomorrow. This bake keeps well in the fridge for three days. Just cover it tightly. To reheat, warm a single portion in the microwave. Add a splash of water first. This keeps the pasta from drying out.

You can also freeze it for a busy night. I once froze a whole batch for my grandson. He said it tasted just as good weeks later! Cool the bake completely first. Then wrap it well or use a freezer-safe container. It will be happy in your freezer for two months.

Thaw it overnight in the fridge before reheating. Batch cooking like this matters. It gives you a gift of time on a hectic day. You deserve a warm meal without the work. **Have you ever tried storing it this way?**

Share below!

Simple Fixes for Common Hiccups

Even grandmas have little kitchen troubles. Here are easy fixes. First, if your sauce is too thin, let it simmer longer. I remember when my sauce was once like soup. A few more minutes on the stove fixed it. This matters because a thicker sauce coats the pasta perfectly.

Second, if your spinach is soggy, just wilt it quickly. Fold it into the hot sauce for only 30 seconds. It will cook perfectly from the heat. Third, watch your pasta cook time. Always taste a piece a minute before the timer goes off.

Al dente pasta bakes up much better. This tip builds your cooking confidence. You learn to trust your own taste. **Which of these**

problems have you run into before?

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Can I make this gluten-free?

A: Yes! Use your favorite gluten-free penne pasta. Check your sausage and tomato can labels too.

Q: Can I make it ahead?

A: Absolutely. Assemble the whole dish but don't bake it. Cover and refrigerate for up to a day. Add a few extra minutes to the bake time.

Q: What if I don't have fresh herbs?

A: That's okay. Use one teaspoon of dried parsley and basil instead of the fresh. The flavor will still be lovely.

Q: Can I double the recipe?

A: You sure can. Use a very large pan or two separate baking dishes.

Fun fact: This recipe doubles perfectly for a potluck!

Q: Is the baking step required?

A: No, it's optional. You can just stir the cheese into the hot pasta on the stove. It will melt right in. **Which tip will you try first?**

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this recipe brings warmth to your table. Cooking is about sharing and creating small joys. I love hearing your stories too. Tell me all about your kitchen adventures.

See also [Butterscotch Oatmeal Holiday Squares](#)

Have you tried this recipe? Let me know how it turned out for you.



Your comments are my favorite thing to read with my morning tea.

Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



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Christmas Chicken Sausage Pasta Bake

Author: Elowen Thorn

Cooking Method: [Stovetop Baking](#)



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Cuisine: [American](#)



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Courses: [Dinner](#) [Main](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **10 minutes**



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Cook time: **30 minutes**

Rest time:



Total time: **40 minutes**



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Servings: **4 servings**



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Calories: **680 kcal**

Best Season: **Summer**

Description

Easy Chicken Sausage Pasta

Ingredients

For the Marinara Sauce:

- ☐ 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- ☐ 1 1/2 cups (180g) diced red onions
- ☐ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ☐ 1 (28-ounce) can (795g) crushed tomatoes
- ☐ 1 tablespoon honey or granulated sugar
- ☐ 1/4 cup (5g) chopped fresh parsley
- ☐ 1/4 cup (5g) chopped fresh basil
- ☐ 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ☐ Salt to taste

For the Pasta:

- ☐ 8 ounces (225g) penne pasta
- ☐ 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- ☐ 1 pound (450g) chicken sausage, cut into bite-sized pieces
- ☐ 4 to 6 cups (100–150g) baby spinach
- ☐ 1 1/2 cups (140g) shredded mozzarella cheese
- ☐ Chopped parsley for garnish
- ☐ Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Heat the olive oil in a large oven-safe sauté pan set over medium-high heat. Add the diced red onions and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions become softened and translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for an additional 30 seconds.

2. Stir in the crushed tomatoes and allow the mixture to reach a rapid simmer for 1 to 2 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and let the sauce continue to simmer gently for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring periodically. Incorporate the honey (or sugar), parsley, basil, and oregano. Cook for an additional minute, then season the sauce with salt to taste. Turn off the heat and set aside.
3. Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil in a medium pot. Season the water generously with salt. Add the penne pasta and cook for 7 to 9 minutes, or until the desired texture is achieved. Drain the pasta and briefly rinse it under cold water to stop the cooking process. Set aside.
4. Heat the remaining olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken sausage and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, or until fully cooked and lightly browned. Add the prepared marinara sauce and heat for 1 minute.
5. Add the baby spinach and fold it gently into the sauce. Allow the spinach to wilt, which should take approximately 30 seconds.
6. Add the cooked pasta to the skillet and stir until evenly combined with the sauce and sausage. Sprinkle the shredded mozzarella cheese over the top. Transfer the skillet to the preheated oven and bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the cheese is melted, bubbly, and lightly browned at the edges.
7. Remove the skillet from the oven. Garnish with chopped parsley and season with additional salt and pepper as desired. Serve warm.

Notes

To prepare this Easy Chicken Sausage Pasta as a gluten-free dish, substitute the regular penne with certified gluten-free pasta. Ensure that the chicken sausage and all other packaged ingredients, including crushed tomatoes and seasonings, are labeled gluten-free to avoid cross-contamination. If using store-bought marinara

instead of homemade, confirm that it contains no gluten-derived additives or thickeners.

Keywords: Chicken Sausage, Pasta, Bake, Spinach, Marinara