

# Making Italian Sausage

## Ingredients:

3-5 pounds lean ground pork butt or shoulder  
3 large cloves garlic, crushed and minced  
1 teaspoon dry basil (or fresh)  
1 teaspoon dry oregano (or fresh)  
1 teaspoon fresh minced rosemary  
1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes (or more if you want it hot - go nuts)  
2 or more tablespoons fennel seed (the more, the merrier)  
1 1/2 tablespoons sea salt  
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons Italian (flat leaf) parsley, chopped, (stems removed)  
Hog casings (water packed, or packed in salt)

If you don't have a meat grinder, or want to just make sausage patties, you can save yourself a lot of time and trouble by purchasing ground pork and just season as instructed.

Hand-trim all visible fat from the outside of pork, then cube the meat, and as much of the fat as possible.

Season it with salt, pepper, herbs, fennel, garlic, hot pepper flakes, and all of the other spices, then allow it to cure and marinade for a few days in your fridge. Here's the key - you're making Italian Sausage. So you can't overdo it on the fennel. OK? Pour it on. And if you want it spicy, add a lot of red pepper flakes. Trust me, it takes quite a bit to make it spicy, so don't be shy. Dive right in.

Put this in an air-tight container or zip lock and allow to cure in your fridge for 24 hours or more. Then remove from the refrigerator and run through the grinder.

Add 1/2 cup dry white wine and mix again by hand.

At this point, roll a little bit into a sausage link and cook it on the griddle. Taste it. How is it? Does it need more salt? If so, add some more to the mix. Is there enough fennel? Add more if you need more. How about the consistency? Is it too dry? If so, add some olive oil and mix it in. What if you're making hot sausage? Is it hot enough? Add more hot peppers. Mix it up, roll up another ball, and cook it again. Taste it. You want to make sure you know how this is going to taste before you stuff it into casings.

Stuff by hand or use sausage stuffing attachment on electric meat-grinder. It's advisable not to use a blade in meat-grinder when stuffing the sausages.