

Italian Sausage and Penne

Ingredients:

5 tbl. olive oil
4 cloves garlic, slivered
1 lb. sweet and/or hot Italian sausages
4 cups broccoli florets, cut in both small and large pieces
12 oz. penne
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving at the table
¾ tsp. salt
½ tsp. fennel seeds
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3 tbl. chopped fresh fennel fronds or parsley (optional)

Directions:

Heat 1 tbl. of the oil in a large skillet. Add the garlic and sauté over medium heat until it is golden and crisp, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove the garlic and set aside.

Remove 2 of the sausages from their casing and crumble the meat. Cut the remaining sausages into thirds. Add all the sausage to the same skillet, and cook over medium heat until browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Then cover, and simmer until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Remove the meat with a slotted spoon and set aside. Pour off all but 2 tbl. fat.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the broccoli, and blanch it for 3 minutes. Remove the broccoli with a slotted spoon, and drain, reserving the cooking liquid. Rinse the broccoli under cold water, drain again, and set aside.

Bring the broccoli cooking liquid to a boil again, and add the penne. Cook at a rolling boil until just tender. Drain, reserving ½ cup cooking liquid. Keep the penne warm in a covered bowl on top of the stove.

In a large saucepan, heat the sausage, broccoli, reserved ½ cup cooking liquid, and remaining 4 tbl. olive oil.

Place the pasta in a heated serving bowl, and add the sausage mixture. Top with the Parmesan, salt, fennel seeds, pepper and fennel fronds. Toss well, and sprinkle with the reserved garlic. Serve immediately, and pass the Parmesan

~ Credit: Silver Palate The New Basics