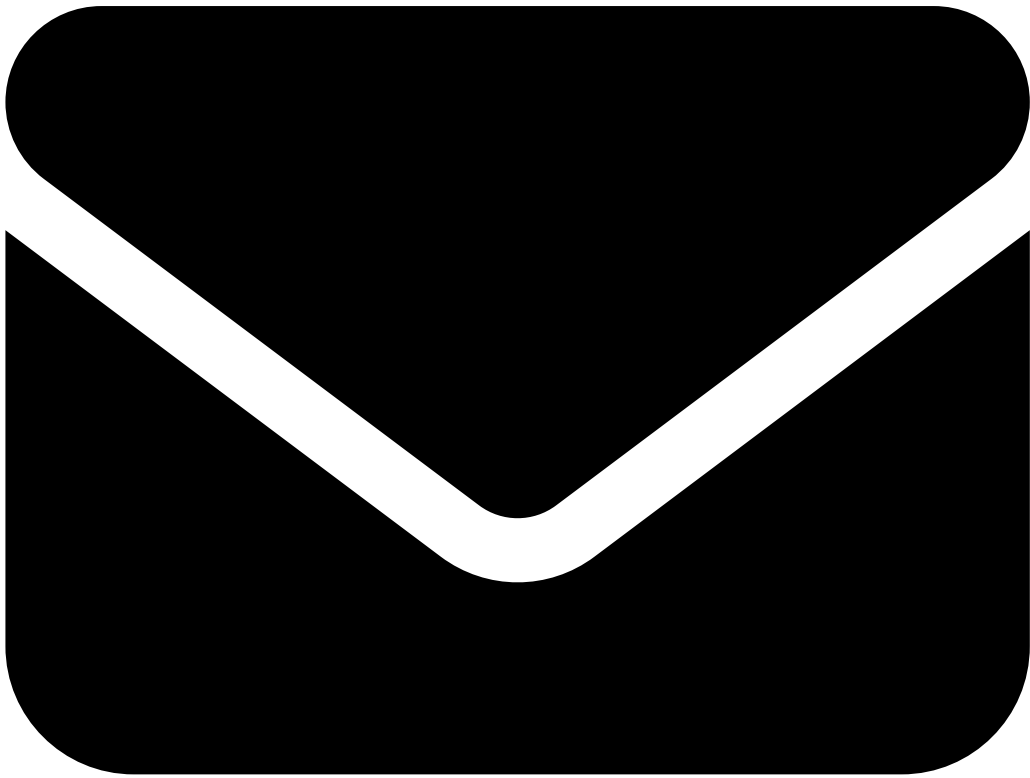


Italian Baked Pasta with Butternut Squash and Sausage

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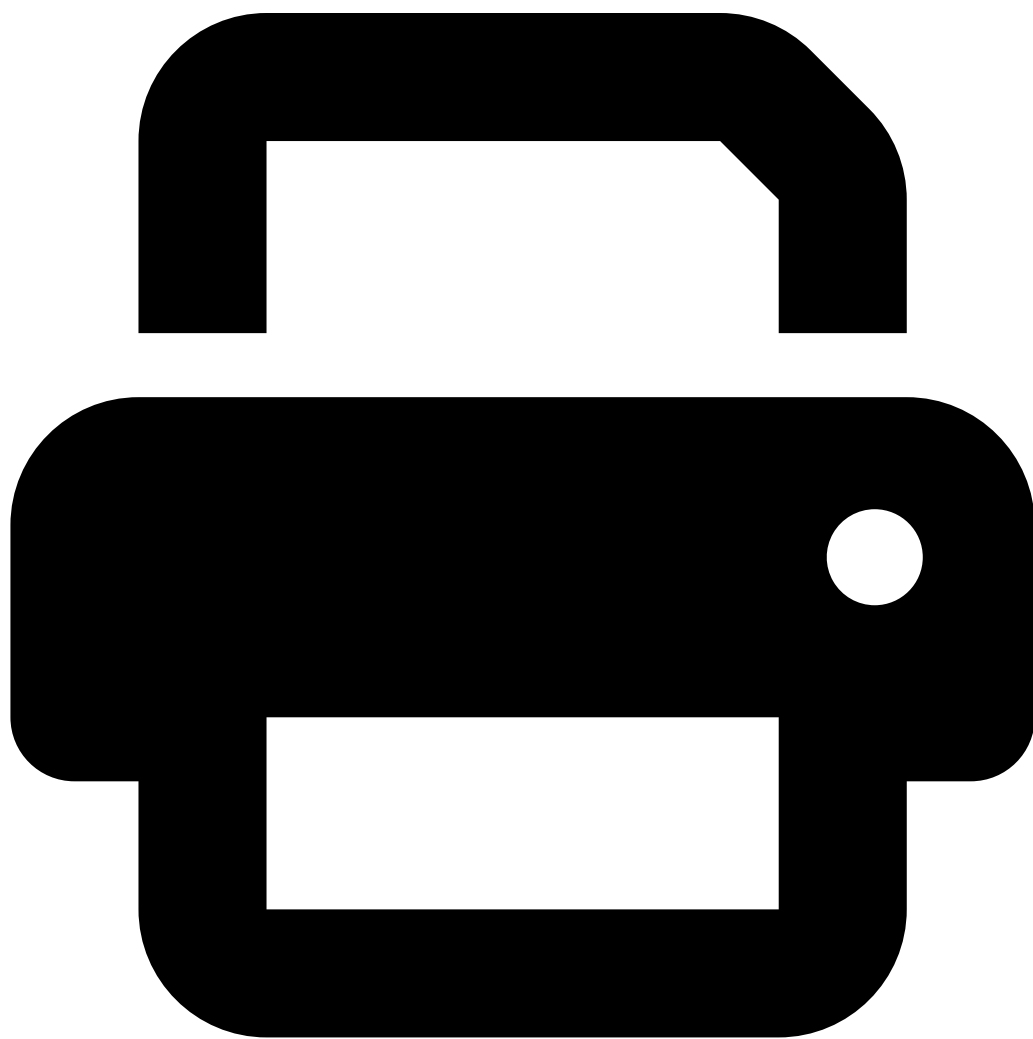
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There is nothing I love more than a good baked pasta, especially when the weather starts to cool down and I'm craving something warm and comforting. Growing up with Italian cooking, pasta was always a staple in our kitchen, and I still love finding new ways to bring those familiar flavors together.

This Italian baked pasta with butternut squash and sausage is one of those dishes that brings everything I love about fall cooking into one baking dish. I roast the butternut squash first to bring out its natural sweetness, then combine it with savory Italian sausage, garlic, fresh sage and a creamy Parmesan sauce. Add rigatoni, plenty of mozzarella and a little more Parmesan, and you have a bubbling, golden baked pasta that's hard to resist.

I especially love how the sweetness of the squash balances the sausage and savory cheeses. It's hearty, full of flavor and

perfect for a Sunday dinner or anytime you're feeding family and friends. Best of all, you can prepare it ahead of time, making dinner that much easier.

Things to know about this Italian baked pasta dish recipe

This baked pasta is all about bringing together simple Italian ingredients that complement each other. Roasting the butternut squash first brings out its natural sweetness and gives it a little caramelization. I like keeping the squash in bite-sized pieces rather than mashing it into the sauce so you get those tender, sweet bites throughout the pasta.

I use sweet Italian sausage for a savory balance, but hot Italian sausage works just as well if you like a little heat. Fresh sage is another ingredient I wouldn't skip. It pairs beautifully with butternut squash and gives the dish that wonderful earthy flavor that makes it perfect for fall.

One of my biggest tips for baked pasta is to cook the rigatoni just shy of al dente. The pasta will continue cooking in the oven as it absorbs some of that creamy Parmesan sauce. You can also assemble everything a day ahead, cover and refrigerate until you're ready to bake. It's a great dish to have ready when you're expecting family or company.

You can substitute hot Italian sausage for sweet sausage if you prefer a little heat. You can also use vegetable broth instead of chicken broth.

Storage: Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 3–4 days.

Reheating: Reheat individual portions in the microwave or cover the baking dish with foil and warm in a 350°F oven. Add a splash of broth or cream if the pasta needs moisture.

Make Ahead: Assemble the pasta up to one day ahead, cover and refrigerate. Bake covered for approximately 20 minutes, then uncover and bake another 15–20 minutes until hot and bubbly.

Serving suggestions

Serve with:

- Italian garlic bread or homemade baguettes.
- A simple arugula salad with lemon dressing.
- Roasted Brussels sprouts.
- Italian marinated vegetables.

Let's Make Dinner!

If you love comforting Italian pasta dishes as much as I do, I have plenty more recipes for you to try! If you're looking for another cozy dinner, try my Italian Wedding Soup, Creamy Tortellini Soup with Italian Sausage, or French Onion Soup with an Italian Twist.

If baked pasta is more your style, be sure to check out my other Italian pasta recipes for more family-friendly dinner inspiration.

A few of my favorite kitchen tools for this recipe:

- 9 x 13-inch baking dish
- Large pasta pot
- Box grater for freshly grated Parmesan
- Rimmed baking sheet
- Chef's knife for preparing the butternut squash

If you make this Italian Baked Pasta with Butternut Squash and

Sausage, I'd love to hear what you think! Please leave a comment and rating below. And if you share it on Instagram, tag me so I can see what you're making in your kitchen!

Italian Baked Pasta with Butternut Squash and Sausage



This Italian Baked Pasta recipe with Butternut Squash and Sausage combines roasted butternut squash, savory Italian sausage, fresh sage and rigatoni tossed in a creamy Parmesan sauce. Topped with mozzarella and baked until golden and bubbly, it's a hearty, comforting dinner perfect for fall and winter.

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled, seeded and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 lb. sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh sage, chopped
- 1 Lb. rigatoni pasta (you can use any short past shape)
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 cups cups milk
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano, divided
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

- salt and pepper totaste
- Fresh sage leaves for garnish (optional)

1. Roast the butternut squash: Preheat oven to 400°F. Place the cubed butternut squash on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil and toss to coat. Spread into a single layer and roast for 20–25 minutes, or until tender and lightly caramelized. Remove and set aside.
2. Cook the sausage: Heat the remaining tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Remove the sausage from its casings and add to the skillet. Break it apart with a wooden spoon and cook until browned and cooked through, about 7–9 minutes.
3. Add aromatics: Add the chopped onion and cook for 3–4 minutes until softened. Stir in the garlic and fresh sage and cook for another 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. . Prepare the cream sauce: Pour in the chicken broth and milk. Stir to combine and bring to a gentle simmer. Add 1 cup of the grated Parmesan cheese. Stir until incorporated and allow the sauce to simmer for 3–5 minutes until slightly thickened. Season to taste.
5. Cook the pasta: Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the rigatoni until about 2 minutes shy of al dente according to package directions. Drain, reserving a little pasta water.
6. Combine: Add the cooked pasta and roasted butternut squash to the sausage sauce. Gently toss until everything is coated. If the sauce seems too thick, add a splash of reserved pasta water.
7. Assemble: Reduce oven temperature to 375°F. Transfer the pasta mixture to a greased 9-by-13-inch baking dish.

Sprinkle the mozzarella evenly over the top, followed by the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan cheese.

8. Bake: Bake uncovered for 20–25 minutes, or until the cheese is melted, golden and bubbling around the edges. Let rest for 5–10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh sage if desired.



Chef's Tip: Don't overcook the butternut squash when roasting. You want it tender but still holding its shape so you get delicious pieces of squash throughout the baked pasta.

Main Course

Italian

Italian baked pasta