

Orecchiette with Italian Sausage and Broccolini

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Orecchiette with Italian Sausage and Broccolini was a favorite on our restaurant menu – not just with our guests, but with the cooks in the kitchen too. They loved making it because it came together quickly and easily, yet never failed to impress. The little “ears” of pasta held onto every bit of savory sausage and garlic, while the broccolini added a fresh, vibrant balance. It was rustic, comforting, and satisfying – the kind of dish that reminded us all why simple Italian cooking is so timeless. Now, I’m sharing it here so you can enjoy the same flavors at home.

What to know about this orecchiette with Italian sausage and broccolin

- **Orecchiette pasta** – The name means “little ears” in Italian, and the shape is perfect for catching bits of sausage, cheese, and sauce. This pasta is traditional in the Puglia region of Southern Italy.
- **Why sausage and broccolini?** – The combination is a classic pairing. The richness of Italian sausage balances beautifully with the slightly bitter, fresh flavor of broccolini (or traditional rapini, also called broccoli rabe).
- **Quick and easy** – This dish cooks in about 30 minutes, making it weeknight-friendly but still elegant enough to

serve guests. It's one of those recipes restaurant cooks love because it delivers big flavor without being complicated.

- **Ingredient swaps** – You can use broccoli rabe for a more traditional bitter note, or substitute regular broccoli if broccolini isn't available. For a lighter option, try chicken sausage instead of pork.
- **Cheese matters** – Freshly grated Parmesan (or Pecorino Romano) brings the salty, nutty finish that ties everything together.
- Craving more cozy Italian pasta dishes? Try my Sausage and Lentil Pasta for another rustic classic, or keep it simple with Pasta e Fagioli, a timeless comfort food favorite. And if you love quick chicken dinners, don't miss my Tuscan Chicken Under a Brick – a restaurant-inspired dish made easy at home!

Ingredients

• Orecchiette with Italian Sausage and Broccolini

Serving Size: 4

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 12 oz orecchiette pasta
- 1 lb. spicy Italian sausage (casings removed)
- 1 bunch broccolini, trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 cloves minced garlic

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 3 tbsp olive oil

- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)

- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup reserved pasta water
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (plus extra for serving)

- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. **Prep the broccolini:** Trim off the tough ends of the broccolini stems (about ½ inch) and cut the stalks into bite-sized pieces, keeping the florets mostly intact.
2. **Blanch the broccolini:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add broccolini and cook for 2–3 minutes until bright green and just tender. Transfer to a kitchen towel dry and set aside.
3. **Cook the pasta:** In the same pot of salted water, add orecchiette and cook until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of pasta water before draining.
4. **Cook the sausage:** In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add sausage and cook, breaking it into small pieces, until browned and cooked through, about 6–7 minutes.
5. **Build the sauce:** Add , garlic, onion and red pepper flakes. Cook until fragrant and translucent. (3-4 minutes.) deglaze the pan with the white wine, waiting until fully absorbed before proceeding. Then add the chicken stock, and pasta water, simmer for 5 minutes or

until sauce begins to thicken.

6. **Combine everything:** Add pasta and blanched broccolini to the skillet, tossing with sausage. Gradually add reserved pasta water until the sauce lightly coats the pasta.
7. **Finish and serve:** Stir in Parmesan, season with salt and pepper, and toss well. Serve hot with extra cheese on top.