

# MEALTIME HELPER

MAKING MEALTIME EASY

## Creamy Tomato & Pork Sausage Linguine - Recipe

**Prep time:** 15 minutes

**Cook time:** 20–25 minutes

**Total time:** 35–40 minutes

**Servings:** 4

### Ingredients

- 12–14 oz (340–400 g) linguine
- 1 lb (450 g) Italian pork sausage (sweet or spicy), casings removed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (if using lean sausage)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, adjust to heat preference)
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) dry white wine or chicken broth (optional, for deglazing)
- 1 can (14 oz / 400 g) crushed tomatoes or tomato passata
- 3/4 cup (180 ml) heavy cream or half-and-half (use a lighter milk for a thinner sauce)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste (optional — deepens tomato flavor)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano or Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt (adjust to taste)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup (50–60 g) grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
- Zest of 1/2 lemon and 1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional, brightens the sauce)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or parsley, for garnish
- Extra virgin olive oil (for finishing), optional

### Directions

1. **Cook the pasta:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook linguine until just al dente according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup pasta cooking water, then drain and set aside.

2. **Brown the sausage:** While the pasta cooks, heat a large wide skillet over medium-high heat. If the sausage is very lean, add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add the sausage (broken into chunks) and cook, stirring and breaking up with a spoon, until nicely browned and cooked through, about 6–8 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer sausage to a plate, leaving rendered fat in the pan.
3. **Sauté aromatics:** Reduce heat to medium. If the pan seems dry, add a drizzle of oil. Add the chopped onion and cook 4–5 minutes until softened. Stir in the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook 30–45 seconds until fragrant (don't let garlic burn).
4. **Deglaze:** Pour in the white wine or chicken broth (if using) and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Let the liquid reduce 1–2 minutes.
5. **Build the sauce:** Stir in the tomato paste (if using) and crushed tomatoes. Add dried oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook 5–7 minutes to thicken slightly and meld flavors.
6. **Finish with cream and cheese:** Reduce heat to low. Stir in the heavy cream and grated Parmesan until the sauce is smooth and slightly thickened. Return the cooked sausage to the pan and heat through 1–2 minutes. If the sauce feels too thick, loosen with a splash of reserved pasta water until you reach the desired consistency.
7. **Combine with pasta:** Add the drained linguine to the skillet (or toss everything in the pasta pot) and toss to coat evenly. Add lemon zest and lemon juice if using, and toss again. Use more reserved pasta water as needed to help the sauce cling to the pasta.
8. **Serve:** Divide among bowls, finish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil (optional), a generous sprinkle of additional Parmesan, and chopped fresh basil or parsley. Serve immediately.

## Tips and variations

- Use spicy Italian sausage for more heat, or mix sweet and spicy for balance.
- For extra veg, toss in baby spinach or sliced mushrooms in step 3 and cook until wilted/soft.
- Make it lighter by substituting half the cream with low-fat milk and reducing Parmesan slightly.
- Leftovers keep 2–3 days refrigerated; reheat gently on the stove with a splash of water or milk to loosen the sauce.

Bright, creamy, and comforting — a speedy weeknight pasta with satisfying sausage flavor.