

CULINARY DISCOVERY PAVILION

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SPICY ITALIAN SAUSAGE RIGATONI WITH BASIL PESTO AND RICOTTA

Rachel Walker, The Hearty Life, United States

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound rigatoni
- ½ to 1 cup reserved pasta water
- 1 pound Graziano Italian sausage, ground
- 1 medium shallot, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 to 2 teaspoons Calabrian chili paste, or to taste
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup whole milk ricotta
- ⅓ cup basil pesto
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, optional
- Fresh basil, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Cook the rigatoni until al dente according to the package directions. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta water, then drain the pasta.

While the pasta cooks, heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the Italian sausage and cook, breaking it into bite-sized pieces, until browned and cooked through, about 6 to 8 minutes. If needed, drain off the excess grease, leaving about 1 tablespoon in the pan.

Add the diced shallot and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until softened. Stir in the garlic and Calabrian chili paste and cook for 30 seconds, just until fragrant.

Stir in the tomato paste, Italian seasoning and crushed red pepper flakes. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until the tomato paste darkens slightly and becomes caramelized.

Pour in the white wine and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Simmer for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the wine has reduced by about half.

Reduce the heat to low. Stir in the heavy cream, then add the ricotta and whisk until smooth and creamy.

Fold in the basil pesto until fully combined.

Add the cooked rigatoni, Parmesan cheese, and about ½ cup of the reserved pasta water. Toss until the pasta is evenly coated, adding additional pasta water, a little at a time, until the sauce is silky and coats the pasta.

Season to taste with kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper.

Garnish with additional Parmesan, fresh basil and a sprinkle of crushed red pepper flakes before serving.



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