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Italian Sausage

A Few Tips Before We Begin

When preparing pork for sausage, **maintaining the right temperature is crucial** for achieving the perfect texture. **Cold is your best friend**—keeping the meat chilled helps ensure the **fat remains evenly distributed**, preventing it from breaking down and creating a mushy consistency. If the pork reaches room temperature, you run the risk of ending up with a sausage that's too soft and lacks the ideal bite. If you don't have a grinder, ask your butcher to grind up a pork butt for you. **Request a *medium grind*** – This gives the sausage the right balance of texture and juiciness. Using more or less than 4 pounds of pork butt? No problem! Scroll to the bottom of the page for easy instructions on how to adjust seasoning levels to match your meat quantity. Proper seasoning is the key to perfect sausage!

Grinding Tips

- If you're using a **stand mixer meat grinder attachment**, place it in the **freezer for at least two hours** before grinding. This helps keep the meat cold during the process.
- Always use the **medium-sized die** when grinding sausage.
- **Avoid a fine grind** – Too fine (like ground pork or hamburger) can make the sausage dense and grainy.

Flavor Adjustments

- This recipe is for **sweet Italian sausage**, but if you prefer **hot Italian sausage**, simply **double the amount of red pepper flakes**.
- You can **double or halve the recipe** without affecting the final results.

Using Milk Powder

- **Milk powder is only needed if making sausage links or patties**—it helps retain moisture and improves texture.

Ingredients

(Yields approximately 4 lbs of sausage)

- **1814g (4 lbs) boneless pork butt**, cubed
- **6g fennel seeds**
- **2g whole coriander seeds**
- **1g dried basil**
- **1g red pepper flakes** *(double for hot Italian sausage)*
- **24g sea salt or kosher salt** *(avoid iodized salt)*
- **2g dried oregano**
- **3g ground black pepper**
- **3g paprika**
- **7g fresh garlic, grated**
- **9g fresh parsley, chopped**
- **1/4 cup red wine vinegar**
- **1/3 cup cold chicken stock** *(keep refrigerated until needed)*
- **1 cup non-fat milk powder** *(use only if making sausage links or patties – see footnote)*

Instructions

1. Prep the Pork

- Cube the **boneless pork butt** into **1-inch pieces** Keep all the **fat** and **marbling** since it adds flavor and moisture.
- Place the cubed pork in the **refrigerator or freezer for 30 minutes** to keep it cold.

2. Toast the Spices

- In a dry skillet over **medium heat**, toast the **fennel seeds and coriander seeds** for **2–4 minutes**, stirring frequently.
- **Do not walk away**—they toast quickly, and burning them will alter the flavor.

2. Grind the Spices

- Add the **toasted fennel and coriander seeds**, along with the **basil, red pepper flakes, salt, oregano, black pepper, and paprika**, to a spice grinder.
- **Pulse 6–10 times** until coarsely ground.
- Transfer the spices to a bowl and mix in the **grated garlic** and **milk powder*** *(only if making links or patties)*. The **parsley will be added when grinding the meat**.

3. Grind the Meat (Skip if Using Pre-Ground Pork)

- Remove the **meat grinder attachment from the freezer** and attach it to your stand mixer.
- Ensure you are using the **medium-sized die** for grinding.

- If using a **KitchenAid Pro Mixer**, set it to **speed 4** (or just below medium on other mixers). **Do not grind on a high setting**, as it can **melt the fat**.
- Add the **fresh chopped parsley** at the beginning of the grind.
- Grind all the pork into a mixing bowl and immediately return it to the **refrigerator**.

4. Mix the Sausage

- Attach the **paddle attachment** to your stand mixer.
- Remove the bowl of ground pork from the refrigerator.
- Add the **ground spice mixture, red wine vinegar, and cold chicken stock** to the meat.
- Mix on **the lowest setting** for **about 1 minute**, or until the spices are fully incorporated. If mixing by hand, work quickly to avoid warming the meat.

💡 *Only add the non-fat milk powder if making sausage links or patties. Otherwise, omit it.*

5. Refrigerate Overnight

- Cover the bowl **tightly** and refrigerate **overnight** to allow the flavors to meld.

Now, Get Creative!

Your **homemade Italian sausage** is ready to be used in countless ways! Try:

- **A rich and savory ragù** to serve with pasta or polenta.
- **Juicy sausage patties** on toasted burger rolls with your favorite toppings.
- **Stuffing the sausage into natural casings** to make flavorful links—it's easier than you think!

👉 [Click here for step-by-step stuffing instructions](#) and unleash your culinary creativity!

How to Scale the Seasoning for Any Amount of Pork:

1. **Start with the base recipe (4 lbs of pork).**
2. **Divide each spice measurement by 4** (to get the amount per 1 lb of meat).
3. **Multiply by the total pounds of pork you're using** (e.g., 2 lbs, 6 lbs, etc.).

💡 Example:

- This recipe calls for **24 gr salt** for 4 lbs of pork:
 - **Per pound:** $24 \text{ gr} \div 4 = 6 \text{ gr per pound}$
 - **For 2 lbs:** $6 \text{ gr} \times 2 = 12 \text{ gr total}$
 - **For 6 lbs:** $6 \text{ gr} \times 6 = 36 \text{ gr total}$

Proper **seasoning** is key to achieving the best flavor, so measuring accurately will help maintain the right balance.

Freezing Sausage

- Divide sausage into **individual portions** or meal-sized servings. This makes it easier to thaw only what you need.
- If freezing **links**, you can wrap them individually or separate them with parchment paper to prevent sticking.
- If freezing **ground sausage**, flatten it in a freezer bag for quicker thawing.

1. Use Proper Freezer Containers

- Wrap sausages tightly in **plastic wrap** or **aluminum foil** to prevent freezer burn.
- Place them in a **freezer-safe bag** or an **airtight container** to keep out moisture.
- Remove as much **air** as possible from the bag before sealing.

2. Label and Date

- Write the **date** and **type of sausage** on the container so you can track its freshness.
- Sausage is **best** used within **three months** for optimal taste and texture.

How to Thaw Frozen Sausage

To preserve texture and flavor, use **one of these safe thawing methods**:

✅ **Refrigerator (Best Method)** – Place frozen sausage in the fridge **overnight** or for about **24 hours** before cooking. This keeps it at a safe temperature.

✅ **Cold Water Method** – Submerge the sealed sausage package in **cold water** and change the water every **30 minutes** until thawed.

⚠️ **Avoid thawing at room temperature**, as this can cause bacteria to grow.