

## Linguine with Sausage, Fennel & Roast Tomatoes



Coming up with new and exciting pasta dishes can present a bit of a challenge in my house as every member of the family has their favourite and they don't like to deviate. On this occasion I decided not to ask their opinions and went about creating a beautiful, silky linguine dish with my palate the main priority. I love a good Italian Sausage and they make the most delicious instant meatballs when removed from their casings. Fennel in any shape or form is up there on my favourite veggie list, as is glorious fresh tomatoes.

They were a little on the elderly side but well worth saving, so a good slow roast for maximum sweetness and flavour was the order of the day. With those key ingredients at hand, I had a bit of a rifle through the kitchen and added some staples to build on the flavours and textures of this epic pasta dish. Shut every door in the house. This was the total goods.

You may use whatever pasta shape you desire. I used linguine because I will admit, I am a massive fan of a good pasta slurp. Linguine also takes a little less time to cook than other pasta varieties so with the smell of the sauce cooking it was an absolute no brainer that I wanted this ASAP.

**Prep time: 20 Minutes**

**Cooking time: 25 Minutes**

**\$\$ Medium Budget**

**Serves 4**

500gm of Linguine, cooked to packet instructions, reserving half a cup of pasta water when drained

1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil

4 large, good quality Italian Sausages

1 baby fennel bulb, diced

1 red onion, sliced

1 tsp of dried chilli flakes

2 cloves of garlic, minced

Grated rind of 1 lemon

Juice of 1/2 a lemon

3 medium ripe tomatoes, cut into wedges (or a punnet of grape or cherry tomatoes, halved)

1/2 a cup of dry white wine

1 cup of flat leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped

1/2 a cup of fresh dill, finely chopped

1/3 cup of toasted pine nuts

1 cup of freshly grated parmesan, for the sauce and to serve

Micro herbs, to serve but entirely optional

Lemon wedges, to serve

Sea salt and cracked pepper

Pre heat the oven to 180°C.

Place the tomato wedges on a lined baking tray. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and season with salt and pepper before placing in the oven for 20 minutes.

Heat a large frypan and add a small drizzle of oil. Using your thumb and forefinger, squeeze the sausage meat from the casings, straight into the pan so that you have bite sized meatballs. Give the pan a bit of a toss very now and then and fry the meatballs until golden on all sides. Don't worry about them being perfect, the rustic look is what we are going for here.

Remove the meatballs from the pan and set aside. In the same pan, add a good lug of olive oil and fry the onion until just starting to soften. Add the fennel, garlic, chilli flakes and lemon rind and continue to fry until the fennel is nice and soft. Pop the meatballs back in the pan, season with salt and pepper and pour in the wine, turn the heat down and allow the wine to reduce for a few minutes.

When the linguine is just about ready to drain, pour 1/2 a cup of the starchy pasta water into the pan. Turn the heat up and allow to reduce for a few minutes. Add the tomatoes, parsley, dill and a a sprinkle of the parmesan. Place the drained linguine into the pan and use a couple of large spoons to toss the pasta and meatballs together.

Divide the pasta between four serving bowls. Sprinkle over fresh parmesan, toasted pine nuts and herbs of your choice. Finish with a final drizzle of extra virgin olive oil along with wedges of fresh lemon. Enjoy!

Leftover Parsley & Dill? You may like to cook this....

## Turkish Lamb Meatballs in Warm Yoghurt Sauce