

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes
Total Time: 45 minutes
Servings: 6
Calories: ~580 kcal per serving

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Introduction

There is nothing quite as comforting as a bowl of rich, creamy soup on a chilly evening. This Creamy Parmesan Italian Sausage Ditalini Soup is the ultimate comfort food mashup. It combines the savory, fennel-spiced kick of Italian sausage with the velvety richness of heavy cream and aged Parmesan cheese. The Ditalini pasta (little “thimbles”) are the perfect shape to trap the creamy broth, ensuring every spoonful is a flavor explosion. It is hearty enough to be a meal on its own, served with a slice of crusty garlic bread.

Ingredients

The Base

- 1 lb (450g) Italian Sausage (Hot or Mild, casings removed)
- 1 tbsp Olive Oil (if needed for the pan)
- 1 Yellow Onion (medium, diced)
- 3 cloves Garlic (minced)
- 2 Carrots (peeled and diced)
- 2 stalks Celery (diced)

The Liquids & Seasonings

- 1 tsp Italian Seasoning
- 1/2 tsp Smoked Paprika
- 1/4 tsp Red Pepper Flakes (optional, for heat)

- Salt and Black Pepper (to taste)
- 4 cups Low-Sodium Chicken Broth
- 1 cup Water
- 1 cup Ditalini Pasta (uncooked)

The Creamy Finish

- 1 cup Heavy Cream
- 1 cup Freshly Grated Parmesan Cheese (plus extra for garnish)
- 2 cups Fresh Spinach (packed) or Kale (optional)
- 2 tbsp Fresh Parsley (chopped, for garnish)

Equipment

- Large Dutch Oven or Heavy-Bottomed Pot

- Wooden Spoon
 - Ladle
 - Box Grater (for the Parmesan)
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Instructions

Phase 1: The Sauté (Time: 8 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

1. Heat the Pot: Place your Dutch oven over medium-high heat. If your sausage is lean, add the olive oil. Otherwise, let the pan get hot.
2. Brown the Sausage: Add the Italian sausage to the pot. Break it up with a wooden spoon into bite-sized chunks. Cook until browned and cooked through, about 5-6 minutes. Do not drain the fat; this is where the flavor lives.
3. The Aromatics: Reduce heat to medium. Add the diced onion, carrots, and celery. Sauté for 4-5 minutes until the onions become translucent and the vegetables soften.
4. Garlic & Spices: Add the minced garlic, Italian seasoning, smoked paprika, and red pepper flakes. Stir constantly for 30-60 seconds until fragrant. *Be careful not to burn the garlic.*

Phase 2: The Simmer (Time: 12 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-Low)

5. Deglaze: Pour in the chicken broth and water. Scrape the bottom of the pot with your spoon to lift any browned bits (fond) left by the sausage.
6. Add Pasta: Stir in the uncooked Ditalini pasta.
7. Simmer: Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to a gentle simmer. Cover and cook for 10–12 minutes, or until the pasta is *al dente* (firm to the bite). Stir occasionally to prevent the pasta from sticking to the bottom.

Phase 3: The Creamy Finish (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

8. Add Cream: Reduce the heat to low (you do not want the cream to boil vigorously or it may curdle). Pour in the heavy cream and stir to combine.
9. Add Cheese: Gradually whisk in the grated Parmesan cheese until it is fully melted and the soup is smooth.
10. Wilt the Greens: If using spinach or kale, add it now. Stir until wilted (about 2–3 minutes).
11. Season: Taste the soup. Add salt and black pepper as needed. Remember that Parmesan is salty, so taste before adding extra salt.

Phase 4: Rest & Serve (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: None)

12. Rest: Remove the pot from the heat and let it sit for 5 minutes. The soup will thicken considerably as the pasta absorbs liquid and the cheese sets.
 13. Garnish: Ladle into bowls. Top with fresh chopped parsley and an extra dusting of Parmesan cheese.
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Recipe Notes & Tips

- **The Pasta Problem:** Ditalini pasta absorbs a lot of broth. If you plan on having leftovers, the soup will become very thick (almost like a stew). When reheating, simply add a splash of chicken broth or water to loosen it back up.
- **Cheese Quality:** Do not use the green can of grated Parmesan for this recipe. You need freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano for the best flavor and melting texture. Pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents that prevent it from melting smoothly.
- **Sausage Choice:** If using hot Italian sausage, you may want to omit the red pepper flakes to control the heat level.
- **Vegetable Variations:** Feel free to add sliced mushrooms with the onions or substitute the spinach for chopped zucchini.

Nutrition Information (Estimated)

Disclaimer: The following nutrition information is an estimate and will vary based on specific ingredients used (e.g., brand of sausage, type of broth).

Serving Size: 1/6th of recipe (approx. 1.5 cups)

Calories: 580

Total Fat: 41g

Saturated Fat: 18g

Cholesterol: 100mg

Sodium: 980mg

Total Carbohydrates: 26g

Dietary Fiber: 2g

Total Sugars: 4g

Protein: 22g

Vitamin D: 10% DV

Calcium: 25% DV

Iron: 15% DV

Potassium: 10% DV