

- Prep time: 15 minutes
 - Cook time: 30 minutes
 - Total time: 45 minutes
 - Course: Main Course, Soup
 - Cuisine: Italian-American
 - Servings: 6 servings
 - Calories: Approx. 580 kcal per serving
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Ingredients

- 1 lb (450g) Italian sausage, mild or hot (casings removed)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried basil
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth

- 1 (14.5 oz / 410g) can diced tomatoes, undrained
 - 1 (9 oz / 250g) package refrigerated or frozen cheese tortellini
 - 1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream
 - 3 cups fresh baby spinach, packed
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving
 - Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish
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Instructions

1. **Brown the Sausage:** Heat a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add the Italian sausage and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until it's browned and cooked through (about 5-7 minutes). Use a slotted spoon to transfer the sausage to a paper towel-lined plate. Leave about 1 tablespoon of drippings in the pot.
2. **Sauté the Vegetables:** Reduce the heat to medium. Add the olive oil to the pot. Once hot, add the diced onion, carrots, and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened, about 5-7 minutes.

3. Add Aromatics and Spices: Stir in the minced garlic, dried oregano, basil, thyme, and red pepper flakes (if using). Cook for about 1 minute until fragrant.
 4. Create the Roux: Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir to coat everything evenly. Cook for 1-2 minutes to cook out the raw flour taste. This will help thicken the soup.
 5. Build the Broth: Gradually pour in the chicken broth while stirring constantly to prevent lumps. Add the undrained diced tomatoes and the browned sausage back to the pot. Bring the soup to a simmer and let it cook for 10 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.
 6. Cook the Tortellini: Gently stir in the tortellini. If using frozen tortellini, you may need to add 1-2 minutes to the cooking time. Simmer according to the package directions (usually 5-7 minutes) until the tortellini are tender.
 7. Finish the Soup: Reduce the heat to low to prevent the cream from curdling. Stir in the heavy cream and the fresh baby spinach. Cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring gently, until the spinach has wilted and the soup is heated through. Be careful not to let it boil.
 8. Season and Serve: Taste the soup and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper as needed. The amount of salt needed will depend on the saltiness of your broth and sausage. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with a generous sprinkle of freshly grated Parmesan cheese and chopped fresh parsley.
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Recipe Notes & Tips

- **Sausage Variations:** You can use ground chicken or turkey sausage for a lighter version.
- **Tortellini:** You can use fresh or frozen tortellini. If using frozen, do not thaw it beforehand; just add it directly to the simmering soup. Keep in mind that tortellini can absorb a lot of broth if left in the soup for a long time. This soup is best enjoyed fresh. If you plan on having leftovers, you may want to cook the tortellini separately and add it to individual bowls to prevent it from becoming mushy.
- **Vegetable Add-ins:** Feel free to add other vegetables like sliced mushrooms or zucchini. Add them along with the onions, carrots, and celery.
- **Make it Spicier:** Use hot Italian sausage and add an extra pinch of red pepper flakes for a soup with a real kick.
- **Storage:** Store leftover soup in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently on the stovetop over low heat, adding a splash of broth or water if it has thickened too much.

Nutrition Information

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is an estimate and will vary based on the specific ingredients used. This calculation is for one serving (1/6 of the recipe).

- Calories: 580 kcal
- Total Fat: 38g
- Saturated Fat: 16g
- Cholesterol: 95mg
- Sodium: 1250mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 35g
- Dietary Fiber: 3g
- Sugars: 5g
- Protein: 24g