



Sausage Dinners
Sausage, with its hearty flavor, is a satisfying meat for cold days. Try combining sausage with vegetables instead of eggs for easy one-dish meals.

Precooked sausages store well and can be teamed with pantry items for emergency meals. Made in your microwave, these meals can be ready in a moment's notice!

Here are three different recipes using sausage, two of which can be ready to eat in less than 20 minutes. The third, which includes dried lentils, takes longer, but reheats or freezes well if made ahead of time.

Almost any flavor or size sausage can be substituted in these dishes. Just keep the quantity about the same. If substituting fresh (uncooked) sausage in the

two "quickie" recipes, precook the sausage, first, following the directions in Step 2 of the Lentil and Sausage Stew.

If substituting loose bulk sausage, brown it like hamburger, cooking on high for about 6 minutes per pound, stirring several times to break it up.

Lentil and Sausage Stew

- 1 1-pound bag dried lentils
- 3 1/2 cups hot water, divided
- 1 pound Italian sausage
- 1 stalk celery chopped
- 2 carrots, sliced thinly
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon paprika

1. Put lentils in a 3-quart casserole. Add 3 cups hot water, cover. Microwave on high for 5 minutes; let stand covered for 15 minutes.

2. While lentils stand, put sausage in a casserole, and pierce with a fork several times. Add 1/2 cup hot water, cover. Microwave on high for 10 minutes, turning sausage over halfway through. Cool slightly, then peel off skin and slice in 1/4-inch slices.

3. Drain lentils, and stir in sausage and remaining ingredients, except paprika. Cover. Microwave on high for 10 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes, until everything's hot.

4. Stir again and microwave, covered on medium (50%) for 20 minutes. Stir in paprika and let stand 15 to 20 minutes before serving for flavors to blend and lentils to become fully tender. Or, refrigerate until serving time.

5. To reheat, microwave on high stirring every 5 minutes until hot—about 15 minutes. (Use Temperature Probe set for 160°F. But don't forget to stir!) Leftovers freeze well. Serves 6.

Kielbasa and Cabbage

- 6 slices bacon
- 1 head cabbage (about 1 1/2 pounds, cut in thin wedges)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon caraway seeds

1 pound kielbasa, cut into 1-inch pieces, or 1/2-inch slices

1. Put bacon in a flat 2-quart pan (such as 8 x 12 inch). Microwave on high for 5 to 6 minutes until the bacon is cooked. Remove bacon, set aside.

2. Arrange cabbage with the thicker side of the wedges to the outside of the pan, and putting any smaller pieces in the center. Sprinkle onion, sugar, caraway and salt over top. Cover with lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 10 minutes, until cabbage is almost tender. Rotate dish halfway through, if your oven cooks unevenly.

3. Add sliced kielbasa, microwave on high 5 minutes longer to heat through. Let stand 5 minutes.

4. Crumble bacon and sprinkle over top when serving. Serves 4.

TIP: Add two chopped peeled apples with the kielbasa in Step 3 if desired.

Hawaiian Sausage

- 1 20-ounce can pineapple chunks, undrained
- 1 16-ounce can whole sweet potatoes, drained and cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1 pound smoked, precooked sausage, either brown 'n serve links or larger ring sausage
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon margarine or butter

1. Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Cut sausage links in half, or slice ring sausage in thick slices. Combine pineapple, sausage and potato slices in 8-inch square pan.

2. Combine sugar, cornstarch and salt in a 2-cup measure. Stir in 1 cup reserved pineapple juice (add water to equal 1 cup if you are short juice) into sugar mixture, stirring well to combine.

3. Microwave juice on high for 2 1/2 to 3 minutes, stirring each minute, until it boils and thickens. Spoon sauce over sausage mixture, mixing gently.

4. Cover pan with lid or plastic wrap and microwave on high for 10 minutes, stirring once, until hot. Serves 4.

TIP: If using frozen brown and serve sausage, microwave package for 3-4 minutes on high, then let stand for 5 minutes to defrost.

NOTE: The times above are for microwaves with 600-700 watts of power; for 500-600 W, add 10 seconds to each minute; for 400-500 W, add 20 seconds to each minute.

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