

Skillet Wagon Wheel Pasta with Turkey Sausage

Serves 4

✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: For a family-friendly pasta supper that would appeal to diners of all ages, we picked a fun pasta shape—wagon wheels—and added sausage for heartiness. Turkey sausage won us over for its meaty but not overpowering flavor. For the backbone of our sauce, we sautéed an onion and garlic with the sausage; a small amount of flour worked well as the thickener, and adding it before the cooking liquid (a mix of chicken broth and water) and pasta enabled its raw flavor to cook off. We simmered the pasta uncovered so the sauce could reduce and thicken; grated Parmesan gave it a velvety sheen. Baby spinach and peas, stirred in at the end, lightened the dish, while a handful of chopped tarragon added a bit of interest for the adults in the crowd. The spinach may look like too much at first but it wilts down substantially as it cooks. Italian chicken sausage can be substituted for the turkey sausage. Other pasta shapes can be substituted for the wagon wheels; however, their cup measurements may vary (see page 173). For the nutritional information for this recipe, see page 306.

- 1** tablespoon olive oil
- 1** onion, chopped fine
- 8** ounces sweet or hot Italian turkey sausage, casings removed
- 3** garlic cloves, minced
- 2** teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 2½** cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2** cups water
- 8** ounces (3 cups) wagon wheel (or rotelle) pasta
- 5** ounces (5 cups) baby spinach
- 2** ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (1 cup), plus extra for serving
- ½** cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1** tablespoon minced fresh tarragon (optional)
- Salt and pepper

1. Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in sausage and cook, breaking up meat with wooden spoon, until no longer pink, about 4 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute.

2. Stir in broth, water, and pasta. Increase heat to medium-high and cook at vigorous simmer, stirring often, until pasta is tender and sauce has thickened, 15 to 18 minutes.

3. Stir in spinach, one handful at a time, until wilted, about 2 minutes. Off heat, stir in Parmesan, peas, and tarragon, if using. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with extra Parmesan.

QUICK PREP TIP REMOVING SAUSAGE FROM ITS CASING

Italian sausage is sold in several forms, including links (which is most common), bulk-style tubes, and patties. If using links, remove the meat from the casing before cooking so that it can crumble into small, bite-size pieces. To remove sausage from its casing, hold the sausage firmly on one end, and squeeze the sausage out of the opposite end.



