

## Baked Rigatoni with Chicken Sausage

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### *Ingredients:*

- 1 pound of sweet Italian chicken sausage
- olive oil for cooking
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- salt and pepper to season
- 1 teaspoon of dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon of dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon of red pepper flakes, crushed (using the tip of your fingers)
- 1/4 cup of fresh basil, chopped
- 2/3 cup of white wine (I used a Chardonnay)
- 1 (28 ounce) can of crushed tomatoes (I used San Marzano)
- 1/2 teaspoon of sugar
- 1 (16 ounce) package of rigatoni, cooked until not quite al dente; about 10 minutes
- 1 (16 ounce) package of fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced
- 1/2 cup of shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup of grated parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter plus extra to grease the baking pan
- fresh Italian parsley, finely chopped

### *Preparation:*

In a large skillet over medium high heat add sausage and a little bit of olive oil. Crumble and brown sausage. Scoot sausage to the side of the skillet and add chopped onions and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Then add oregano, thyme, red pepper flakes and basil. Stir to combine, about 1 minute. Pour white wine and let it bubble and reduce, about 2 minutes. Then add crushed tomatoes and sugar. Stir well then bring the sauce to a simmer.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Position the rack in the center. Grease a 9½" x 9½"-inch glass baking dish (or you can use a 9" x 13"-inch glass baking dish) with butter. Pour cooked rigatoni into the sauce and toss to combine. Pour half of the pasta into the greased baking dish. Top with half of the sliced mozzarella cheese. Then pour the remaining pasta over the cheese. Then top with the remaining half of the sliced mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella cheese and grated parmesan cheese on top, then dot the entire dish with butter pieces. Bake the rigatoni uncovered for 20 minutes and broil it on high for 1-4 minutes to brown the top. Sprinkle some chopped parsley on top and let the pasta stand for 10 minutes before serving.