

Italian Sausage and Pasta Soup

- 2 lbs. hot or mild Italian sausages
- 3 carrots, peeled and chopped (about 1 ½ cups)
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 3 qts. fat-skimmed chicken broth
- 2 (14-1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes
- 2 (15 oz.) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained (these are simple white beans, but make sure you get small ones. The big ones will work, but won't render the same texture.)
- 1 T. dried basil
- 2 c. dried large shell-shaped pasta (I prefer 'small' shell pasta personally.)
- 4 qts. spinach leaves (about 12.oz) (You can also use greens of any kind, such as Swiss chard)
- Salt and pepper
- About 1 cup grated parmesan cheese

Squeeze sausages from casings (or use bulk sausage) into an 8-10-quart pan over high heat and stir often, breaking the meat apart with a spoon, until browned and crumbly, 8-10 minutes. Spoon out and discard all but 1 T. fat from pan.

Add carrots, onion, and garlic; stir often until onion is limp, 5-7 minutes. Add broth, tomatoes (including juice), beans, and basil, and bring to a boil.

Add pasta, reduce heat, and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until pasta is just tender to bite, about 10 minutes. Skim and discard fat, stir in spinach and cook just until it is wilted, about 30 seconds. Add salt and pepper to taste. Top with parmesan cheese to taste.