

Pasta with Sausage and Fresh Fig Sauce



TIPS:

1. The sausage and fig sauce you see here can be made in the time it takes to boil water and cook pasta, especially if you use precooked sausage, which is actually how most packaged sausage is sold in stores.
2. Fresh figs are seasonal and are sometimes tough to find. No problem. You can make this sauce substituting figs with just about any seasonal fresh fruit - apples, pears, peaches, or plums will work just fine.

Preparation Time: 10-15 minutes

Cooking Time: 10-15 minutes

Ingredients

(for 2-3)

½ Pound (8 Ounces) of Pasta

Salt

2 Handfuls Fresh Figs

3-4 Precooked Sausages (I like using sweet Italian or sun dried tomato chicken sausages for this sauce, but your favorite sausage will work fine)

Italian Seasoning

Sun Dried Tomatoes

Olive or Vegetable Oil (I'm actually using the olive oil from the jar of sun dried tomatoes)

2-3 Garlic Cloves

1 Bell Pepper (I prefer red, yellow, or orange bell peppers for this recipe because they are more flavorful and sweeter than green bell peppers)

Grated Parmesan Cheese

Crushed Red Pepper

Balsamic (or your favorite) Vinegar (optional)



Equipment

10-12 Inch Frying Pan

Spatula

Medium Sized Pot

Large Knife

Cutting Board

Large Spoon

Colander

Tongs (to serve pasta - you can also use a fork)

Timer



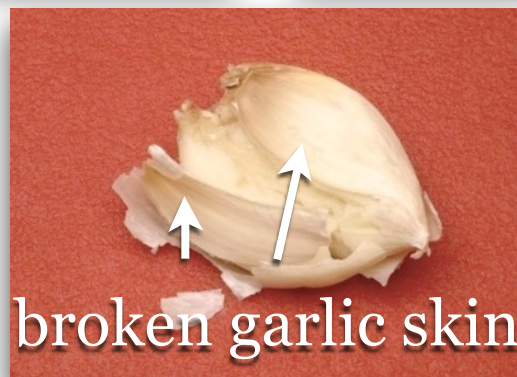
1. Fill a medium sized pot about half full with **cold tap water**. Put the pot on the stove, and turn on the burner to HIGH heat.



2. While the **water** warms, pull **2-3 garlic cloves** from a **fresh garlic bulb**.



Cover **one garlic clove** a time with the flat side of a wide bladed (chef's) knife. Press on the top flat side of the knife with the heel of your hand until you hear and feel the **garlic skins** pop open.



Peel off the **garlic skins**. Then hold the **garlic cloves** securely to the cutting board with curled fingers, and let the side of the knife blade touch and glide along your curled knuckles as you cut the **garlic** into thin slices about 1/8 inch (3 mm) wide.



Finish by chopping the **garlic slices** into smaller pieces about as shown below.



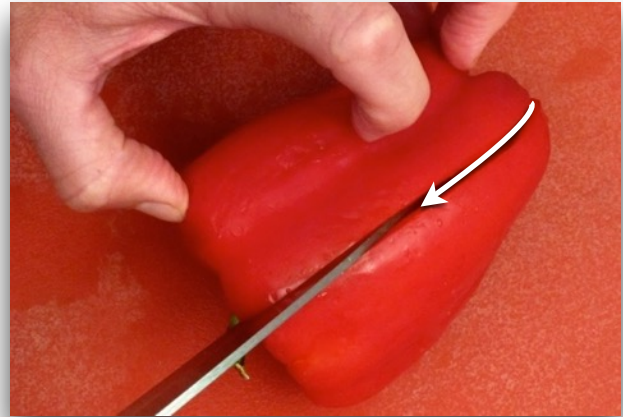
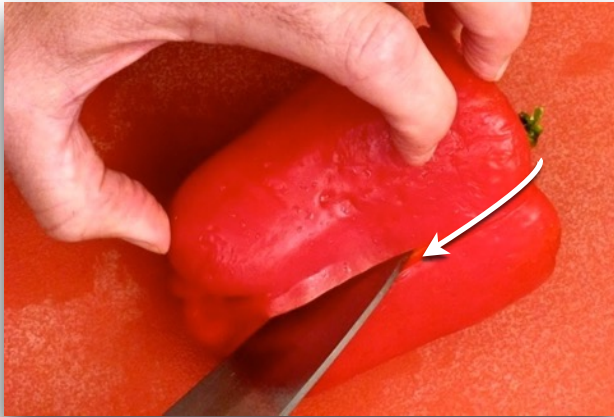
3. Rinse and shake dry **2 handfuls of fresh figs** and a **bell pepper**.



4. Prepare the **fresh figs** by first removing the **stems**. Then cut the **figs** in half lengthwise and cut them again in cross section in half or thirds (depending on the size of the figs) to bite-sized pieces.



5. Prepare the **bell pepper** by cutting the **pepper** in half lengthwise without cutting into the **seed cluster** in the **middle of the pepper**.



Pull the **pepper halves** apart and remove the **seed cluster**.



Cut **each pepper half** lengthwise into strips $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (6-12 mm) wide, and then cut those strips in cross section into pieces also $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (6-12 mm) wide.



6. Cut about a **handful of sun dried tomatoes** (estimate - you don't have to measure them in your hand) into strips about 1/4 inch (6 mm) wide, and then cut those strips in cross section into pieces also about 1/4 inch (6 mm) wide.



7. Cut **3-4 precooked sausages** in cross section into slices 1/4 - 1/2 inch (6-12 mm) wide.



8. Let the water come to a big bubble, rapid boil as shown in the full boil photo below, not just a small bubble, fizzy boil shown in the **NOT a full boil** photo below, to help ensure the **pasta** cooks properly to desired doneness.



full boil



NOT a full boil

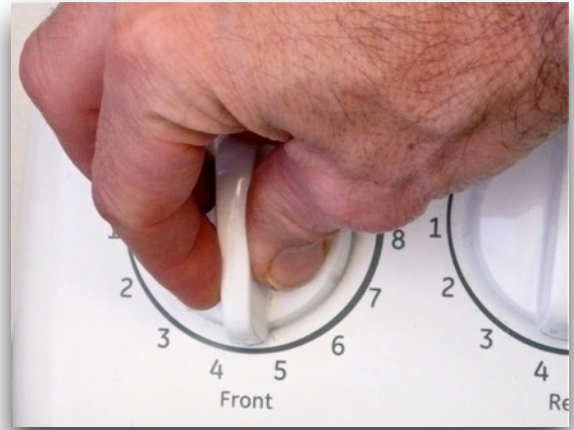
When the water comes to a full boil, add about as much **salt** as shown below (optional but adds flavor to pasta) and...



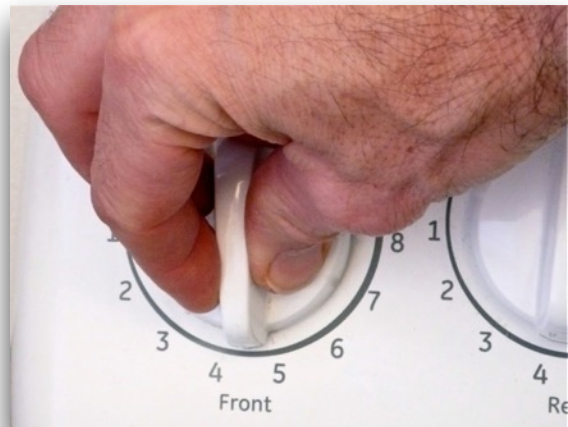
...add **½ pound** (8 ounces) **of pasta** to the boiling water and stir until all the **pasta** is submerged in the boiling water.



9. Put the frying pan on the stove, and turn on the burner to MEDIUM heat.



10. Let the water in the **pasta pot** come back to a full boil. Then turn down the burner heat to MEDIUM to prevent the pot from boiling over, and cook until the timer sounds.



11. Put a colander in the sink, and...



...check the frying pan for the proper cooking temperature by wetting your fingers with tap water and flicking the water onto the pan surface.



The pan is warmed to the proper cooking temperature when the water sizzles on contact with the pan surface and quickly evaporates. (**NOTE:** If the water sizzles and evaporates in a puff as soon as it hits the pan, move the pan to a cool burner for a

few minutes. Turn down the heat setting a few notches on the burner you originally used, and heat the pan again. If the water doesn't sizzle on contact, keep heating the pan until it does.)

12. When the frying pan is properly warmed, add just enough **olive** or **vegetable oil** to coat the pan surface evenly (I'm using a shot of oil from the sun dried tomato jar for a little added flavor), and then, right away, add the **chopped garlic, bell pepper, and sliced sausage**.



Stir occasionally and cook for just a few minutes until the **garlic** becomes fragrant. Then...



...add the **chopped figs** and **sun dried tomatoes** along with a **good shake of Italian seasoning** and **shot of balsamic** (or any) **vinegar** (optional but adds a rich sweet and sour flavor to the sauce).



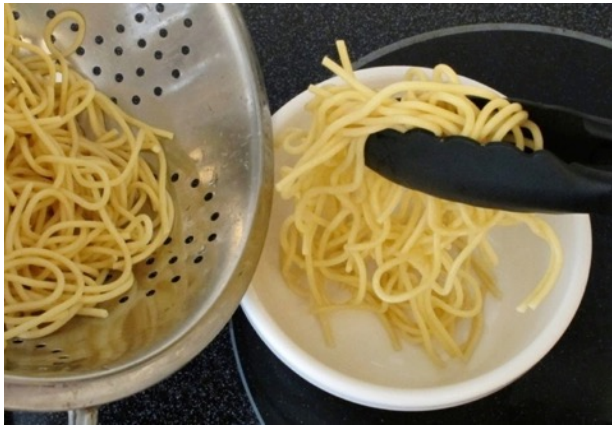
13. When the timer for the **pasta** sounds, pour the **cooked pasta** and hot water into the colander in the sink.



14. Stir the **sauce** occasionally until the **bell peppers** just start to soften but still remain firm, not mushy, and the **sauce** looks about as shown in the picture below on the right.



15. Use tongs or a fork to put the **freshly cooked pasta** in a bowl (or onto a plate) and top with **sauce**.



16. Either have the **pasta with sausage and fresh fig sauce** as is or...



...top with your choice or combination of **grated**

Parmesan cheese and/or **crushed red pepper** to taste.



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