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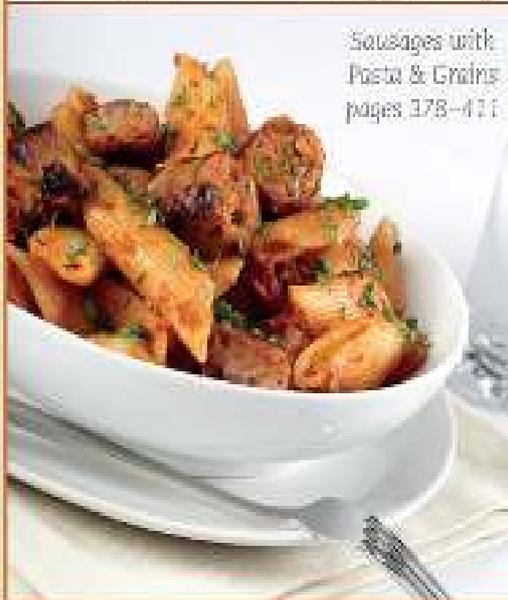


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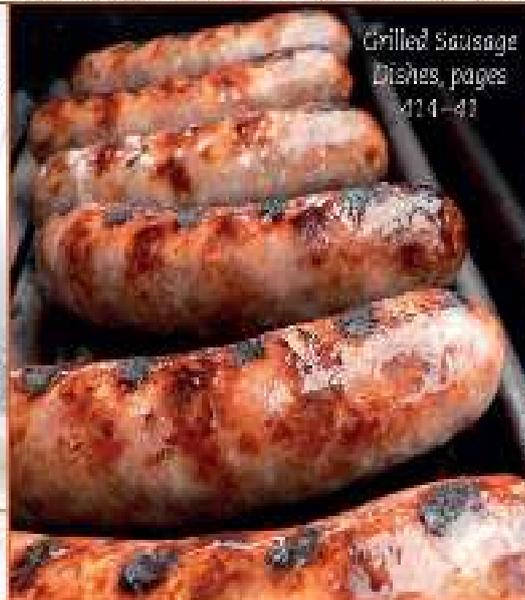


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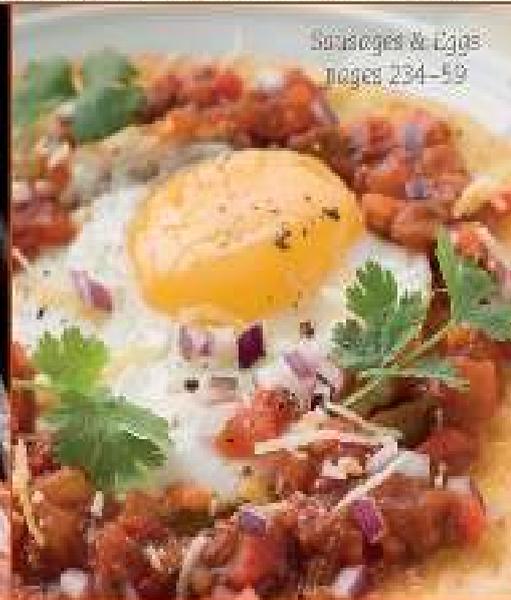
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500 recipes for grinding, spicing, cooking, and
enjoying the food that links the world

ELLEN BROWN

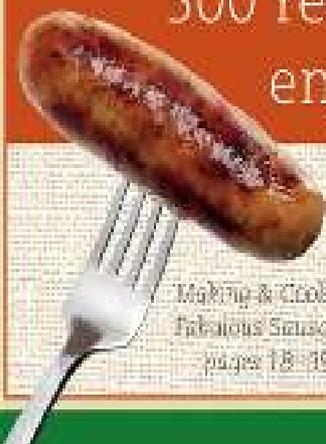
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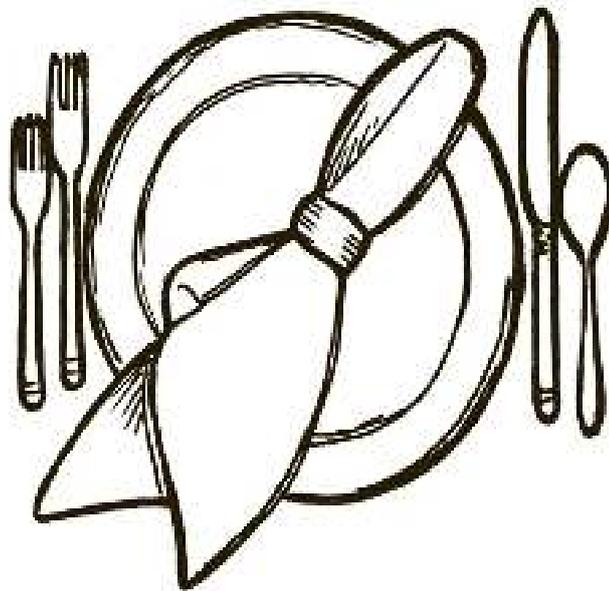
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The Beatles sang “we get by with a little help from our friends,” and in my case “~~get by with a lot of help from my wonderful family.~~” This book is dedicated to Nancy and Walter Dubler, Ariela Dubler, Jesse Furman, David Krimm, Peter Bradley, Josh Dubler, and Lisa Cerami.

INTRODUCTION



When I think about eating at a baseball game, one thing comes to mind: sausages. It could be anything from a hot dog topped with some sauerkraut or a bratwurst in a paper holder. When I think about breakfast, one thing comes to mind: sausage—the sound of sizzling links or patties makes eating eggs or waffles all that more terrific. And when I think about Italian food, one thing comes to mind. You guessed it: sausage. Hot or sweet, whole in casings or crumbled into the meaty, cheesy layers of lasagna or topping a pizza loaded with sauce and mozzarella. Let's face it—I love sausage in all of its glorious, fabulous forms.

Sausages are part of many of my culinary memories—both from the number of cultures that create them to the times of day when I've enjoyed them.

Many times I have slowly walked past shops that line the narrow alley of Venice or been hypnotically drawn to stalls in markets in Nice as I take in the dizzying array of cylindrical foods of all diameters hanging from hooks and piled up on platters.

And then there are meals I've shared with friends as we tear off slices of pizza, trying to get them into our mouths before their garlicky pepperoni and fresh fennel and herb sausage toppings land on the plate below. But I guess that's why they invented forks.

There's no doubt that sausage is fun food. It's fun to eat, and as you'll discover, it's also really fun to make it yourself.

There's no question that you can find some really good sausages in almost every supermarket today, produced by manufacturers that use organic meats and no chemicals. But even with those "gourmet sausages" you can't have exactly the flavor you want or specify the ingredients.

That's where making it yourself comes in. You can choose the meat you want to grind, or you can buy some pre-ground meat and save yourself the time and trouble. You can season the meat with myriad herbs and spices. You can flavor the meat with wine or liquor. You can add nuts and fruits to add texture. You can add cheese to contrast dairy creaminess with hearty meatiness.

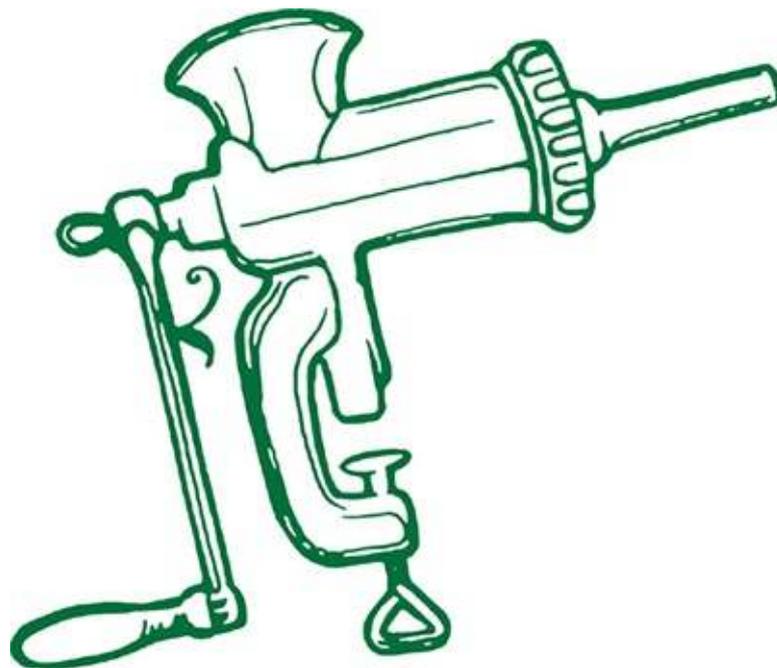
Sausage is a paradox. It's simple food, but it has a complex flavor because of all the additional ingredients added before it's cooked. As simple food it has been around for more than two thousand years; there are references to sausages in Homer's "Odyssey." As a simple food, it also falls into the category of "comfort foods." There's nothing edgy about a sausage. It's about as straightforward a food as you'll find.

But it's a real hands-on process. And that's all part of the fun. You cube the meat, grind it, and knead the sausage mixture to blend its flavors to your personal taste and texture. You massage the meat into its casing and twist it into links with your hands.

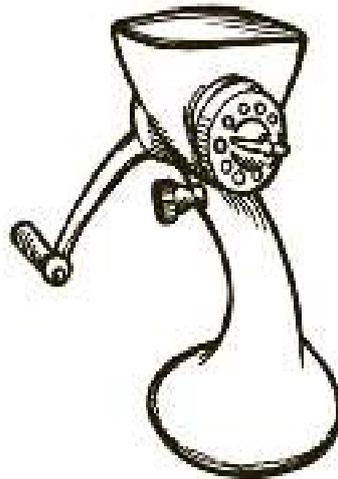
Although you can invest in some equipment and create professional-looking sausages, most of the recipes in this book can be cooked up as patties on the grill or in a skillet on the stove. I recommend making patties as a good first step, because some of the sausage making processes may seem bit daunting and time-consuming at first. According to a quote often attributed to Otto von Bismarck, "To retain respect for sausages and laws, one must not watch them in the making." But the more you do it the faster you'll become, and the sooner you can enjoy the fruits—rather the meats—of your labor.

Today we all want to know that the food we eat is prepared under sanitary conditions and we want to be sure that only quality ingredients are used. That's just another reason to start making your own sausage.

So, from Cajun Shrimp Boudin to Sweet Italian Sausage, this is one grind you'll want to get into.



PART I:



**MAKING
YOUR OWN
SAUSAGE**

Making sausage is no more difficult than making meatloaf. Ground ingredients are seasoned, shaped, and cooked. That's it. In the first chapter, you'll learn the techniques necessary to make sausages either in casings or as patties, as well as how to cook them properly. In the chapters that follow are recipes for some of the world's classic sausage—from spicy Andouille Sausage of Cajun fame to delicate French Garlic Sausage to hearty Sweet Italian Sausage.

While sausage making has an illustrious past, it also is a contemporary food open to endless interpretations and improvisations. Included are my own innovative recipes for Lamb Sausage with Sun-Dried Tomatoes and Pine Nuts and Minnesota Boudin made with wild rice.

The sausage recipes are divided into chapters by the type of protein used as the main ingredient—pork, beef, lamb, veal, chicken and turkey, fish and seafood, and a few vegetarian options. The last chapter includes the plain and fancy cousins of sausages—homey scrapple from Pennsylvania and elegant country pork terrine from France.

SAUSAGE
SAVVY:



EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
MAKING SAUSAGE

Few culinary skills are involved when it comes to making sausage. There's no spinning a swan from molten sugar or folding layers of puff pastry. It takes some basic equipment, most of which you likely have and some of which you can improvise. It takes some ingredients—fresh ones you'll need to buy and dried herbs and spices you probably have in the pantry. And making sausage takes some time. Read this chapter through in its entirety to introduce yourself to the simple process of sausage making.

EQUIPMENT

You don't need much, and most items will already be on hand.

Kitchen scale. Absolutely necessary to make sure you have the correct amounts of meats and fat per recipe; sausage is not a food that should be “eye-balled” to determine your amount. The scale should be capable of weighing food up to five pounds.

Measuring cups and measuring spoons. An extra set of spoons means that one set can be used for liquid ingredients, the other for dry seasonings.

Good knives. These are essential for all cooking, including making sausage. Keep them sharp.

Kitchen twine. This used to be found in all kitchens, but a recent survey of my friends revealed that it no longer was, so buy some at a hardware or housewares store.

Instant-read thermometer. Along with good knives, this is essential. If you don't have one, here's a good excuse to buy one. Instant-read thermometers are how you determine if the sausages are cooked to a safe internal temperature.

Candy thermometer. Sometimes called a frying thermometer, it clips to the side of a pot. You'll use this to check the temperature of the water when poaching sausages. If you don't want to invest in one, keep popping your instant-read into the pot to keep the water at the correct temperature.

Kitchen funnel. You'll need this to flush out the casings. The nozzle should be narrow so as to not break the fragile casings.

Lots of kitchen towels or a roll of paper towels. Making sausage is messy, and you'll constantly be washing your hands during preparation.

WAYS TO GRIND THE MEAT

Even if you're planning on using pre-ground meat, a meat grinder is a good idea because it can also be used to stuff sausage casings. The food processor is a great grinding alternative. My food processor is so important in my kitchen that it has a reserved corner of the dishwasher; it's in there every time the dishwasher is run.

Sausage can be made in a food processor using the on-and-off pulsing button, but it takes much longer than using a meat grinder because the ingredients are ground in small batches. A food processor is necessary for making seafood sausages. If you end up a serious sausage maker, the chances are good you'll end up with a grinder. Make sure whatever grinder you buy has both a fine and coarse grinding plate; you'll need both for the recipes in this book.

Hand grinders. These are what Grandma used before there was such a thing as pre-ground beef in the market, and they can be purchased for a very little money. They clamp on to a table or the edge of the counter, and your biceps get a good workout using them. Make sure the grinder is made from steel, not plastic; plastic is just not strong enough.

Mixer grinding attachments. If you have a sturdy stand mixer, such as those made by KitchenAid, a meat grinder attachment can be purchased. The cost is the same as a good hand grinder. I use one and recommend it without hesitation.

Electric grinders. Here's where you can spend some big bucks, so be sure you're going to make a lot of sausage before buying one.

Speed up the sausage making by making friends with a friendly butcher who will grind your meat and fat to your specifications. Butchers are sticklers for cleanliness and sanitation, so you know your meat won't be put through a grimy grinder.

HOW TO STUFF SAUSAGE

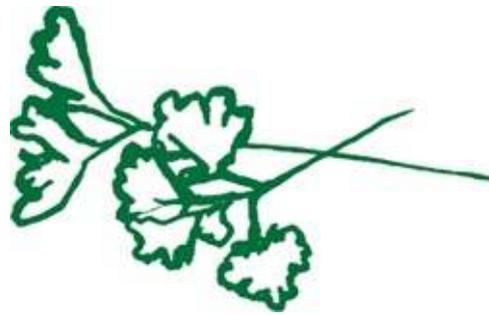
As I wrote in the introduction, there's no need to stuff casings to enjoy most of the recipes in this book. Unless the sausages are poached or baked slowly in the oven, the meat mixture can be formed into patties. But when a set form is desired, you need some device with which to stuff the sausage and some sort of casing into which it can be stuffed. As with

meat grinders, there's a wide range of appliances that are united by the use of a long funnel, the stuffing horn.

Hand-held funnels. These are about 6 inches long, come in various widths, and correspond to the size of sausage casings. Most funnels are made from plastic, and they're very inexpensive. They're fine for a small amount of sausage of two pounds or less, and if you place one through the opening at the end of a pastry bag it works very well.

Mixer stuffing attachments. If you have the meat grinding attachment for a stand mixer, for about ten dollars you can get the sausage stuffing attachment, and the problem is solved.

Hand stuffing machines. These come as both push machines with a lever that pushes the mixture into the casings and crank models that push the meat in with a plunger as the crank is turned.



THE CASE FOR CASINGS

Historically, sausages were the first “fast food.” They were hand-holdable and the packaging was edible too. Keeping that in mind, it's not surprising that the intestines of pigs, cows, and sheep became part of the equation and are still the best casings.

My first choice is medium-size hog casings, followed by thin sheep casings. If you're only going to buy one, make it hog casings; if you fill them with less meat mixture you can make sausages as thin as those formed in a sheep casing. One pound of sausage mixture fills about two feet of hog casings and about four feet of sheep casings. While my local supermarket carries hog casings, I realize that's not the case everywhere. Look at the [Resources](#) to order casings. Collagen casings are also available. They're natural because they're made from the connective tissue of animals. Collagen is the tissue that turns meltingly tender when meat is braised and it turns into gelatin. Collagen casings don't stretch like natural casings, making them difficult to work with.

So you open up your package of casings, and what do you find? A

bunch of yucky-looking strands about the width of linguine. They're gritty because they're packed in coarse salt. Sausage casings can be kept refrigerated in that state up to six months; the salt acts as a preservative.

Here's how to prepare casings so they're ready for stuffing:

1. **Gently pull strands off the hank.** Depending on the brand you buy, they may either be tied together in the center with a plastic twist tie or just a mass of strands in a plastic bag.

2. **Rinse the exteriors well under cold running water.** This is the first step to riding them of excess salt and making them pliable.

3. **Put the casings in a bowl, cover with lukewarm water, and soak for 20 minutes.** The meat for almost all sausage recipes chills for 30 minutes prior to grinding it, so this soaking doesn't slow down the process.

4. **Rinse them inside with cold water.** If you think that those plastic bags in the produce section of the supermarket are hard to get open, they're a snap compared with a length of sausage casing! Start by cutting off a snip from one of the ends, and have a kitchen funnel handy. Pull apart the newly cut top of the casing, and insert the tip of the funnel. Pull about 3 inches of casing onto the funnel. Make sure your sink is empty because this next part is similar to filling up water balloons; you want to slowly run cold water through the funnel to rinse the salt out of the interior of the casing, straighten the casing, and make it wider. While doing this, the casing will be flying all over the sink. You'll soon get the hang of it. Then remove the casing from the funnel.



5. **Put the casings in a bowl, cover with lukewarm water and 1/2 tablespoon distilled white vinegar, and soak until you need them.** The vinegar both softens the casings, and makes them more transparent so they look nicer on the finished sausages. You can soak them this way for up to 30 minutes.

STEP-BY-STEP TO PERFECT SAUSAGE

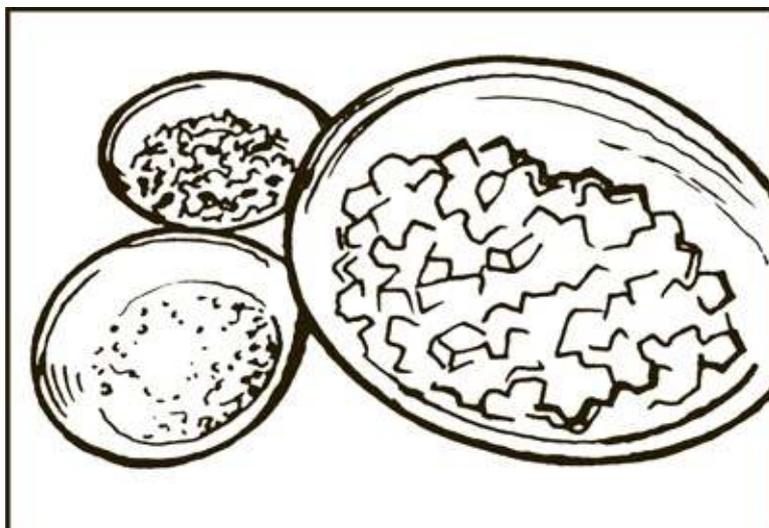
Each chapter in Part I of this book suggests the appropriate cuts of meat to use for each category of sausages. Once your shopping is done, you're ready to begin making sausages.

1. Cut the meat. Cut the meat with a sharp knife into 1-inch cubes; that size works for all meat grinders and a food processor.



Meat should be cut into 1-inch cubes to make grinding easier.

2. Season: when and how. There are two schools of thought on when the best time is to season meat, and I use both of them. Once the meat is cut, either transfer it to a mixing bowl and add dry seasonings, salt, and pepper, or add those seasonings after the meat is ground and you're blending it. I pre-season meat if the recipe specifies a large number of herbs and spices, and after for only a few. The reason is that seasoning prior to chilling is an additional step. You toss everything together in a mixing bowl, and then transfer the seasoned cubes to a baking sheet.

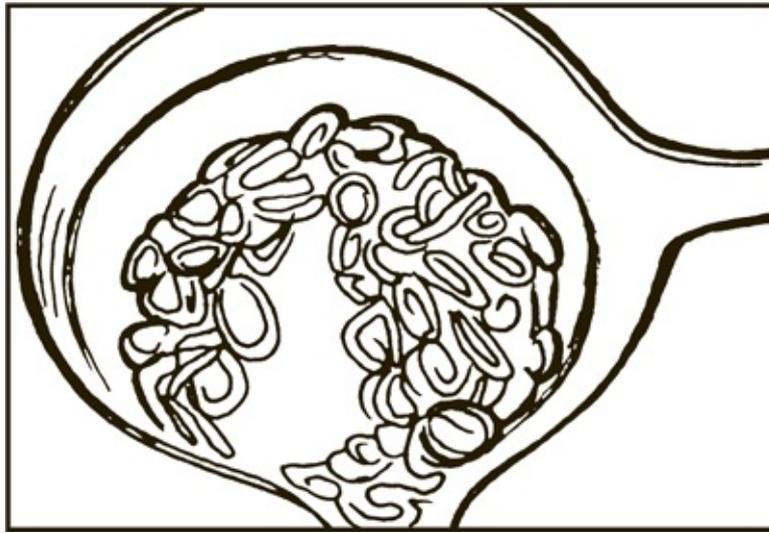


Meat can be seasoned before chilling.

3. Chill the meat. Arrange the meat cubes on a sheet of plastic wrap on a baking sheet, and place the cubes in the freezer for 30 minutes. Do not eliminate this step. Whether using a meat grinder or a food processor, cold meat is easier to grind.

4. Chill the mixing bowl. While the meat cubes chill, put the mixing bowl that will hold the ground meat into the freezer. A cold bowl keeps the meat cold while blending and stuffing.

5. Keep going. For many of these recipes vegetables are sautéed in oil or butter while the meat is chilling. Read the recipe from beginning to end and see if there's something you should be doing rather than watching the clock.



While the meat chills is the time to sauté any additional ingredients.

6. Grind the meat. If using a meat grinder, read the recipe carefully to see if it specifies a coarse or a fine blade. Then grind the meat, pressing the meat down into the grinder mechanism with the plunger given for that purpose. NEVER PUT YOUR HANDS INTO A MEAT GRINDER. If using a food processor, add only $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of meat cubes at a time, and chop them using the on-and-off pulse button. In either case, the ground meat will go into the chilled bowl.

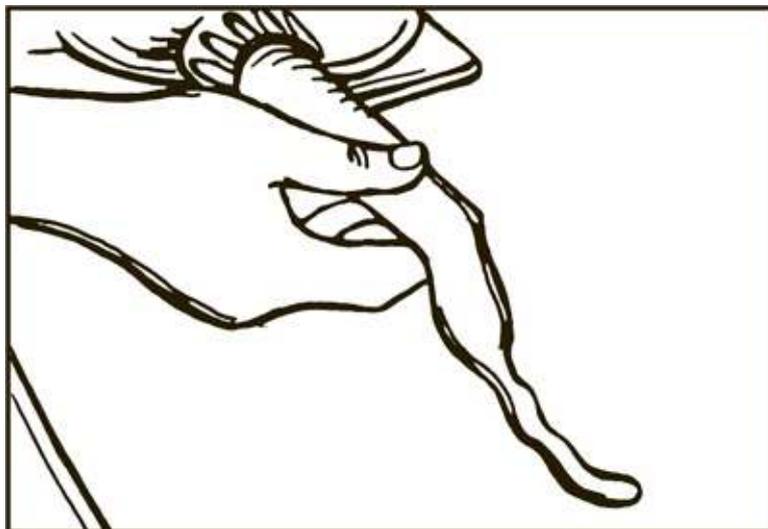
7. Mix it together. Add all other ingredients to the meat, and knead the mixture with your hands until everything is well distributed. I keep a bowl of hot water with a tablespoon or two of white vinegar next to me along with a kitchen towel so that if I need to rinse my hands to fetch an ingredient or answer the phone it's handy.



The sausage mixture should be kneaded with your hands to blend it totally.

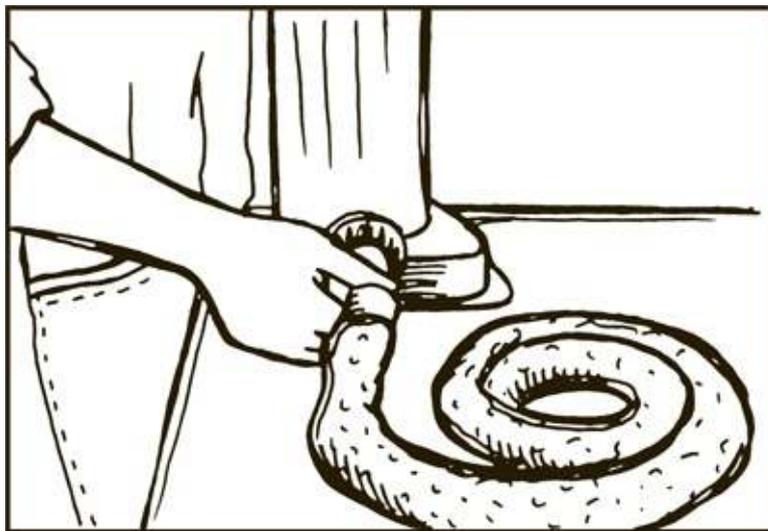
8. Taste for seasoning. Here is one rule of sausage making that should NEVER be broken: You don't taste raw sausage mixture. For all meat mixtures, fry one tablespoon portion in a small frying pan; for seafood mixtures I cook the test sample in a microwave because all of those formulations are poached. Once you've cooked a bit, taste it. Then adjust the seasoning as needed. My recipes are written for a minimum of salt; if you want more, then add it. If you're turning your sausage into patties, skip to Step 12.

9. Arrange the casing. The first step is to bunch up the casing on the funnel of whatever device you're using to stuff the sausages. Pull one strand out of the water, and rinse it again under cold water, and pat it dry with a towel. If necessary, cut another bit off one end to be able to open it fully. The trick to easing the casing over the sausage horn is to do it slowly and carefully. Use one hand to keep the casing straight and feed it to the other hand that eases it over the stuffing horn.



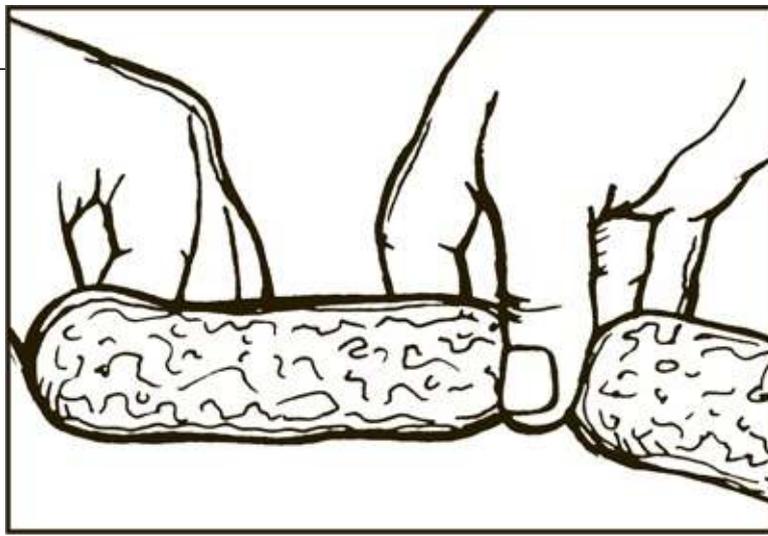
The casing must be eased gently onto the stuffing horn.

10. Stuff the sausage. With the casing on the stuffing horn, pull the end of the casing about 3 inches down. Feed enough forcemeat into the horn so that it starts to enter the casing. Then tie a knot in the casing. You have to regulate the flow of forcemeat as it enters the casing to determine how tightly packed the sausage is. Hold the casing on the stuffing horn with your thumb and forefinger. Increasing or decreasing finger pressure on the casing will determine how tightly and consistently the sausage is packed. Keep filling the casing, holding on to the horn so that the casing fills evenly; you want it full but not bursting. Once all the forcemeat is inserted into the casing, take a minute to even out the width of the sausage. Then tie a knot in the casing at the other end leaving about 3 inches of casing unstuffed.



Hold onto the casing so that the sausage fills evenly.

11. Link the sausage. At this point you have one long link of sausage. Each recipe gives a specific length for the links; they vary from 4 to 6 inches with the majority linked at 5 inches. Until you become accustomed to judging lengths, put a ruler on the counter in front of you. Measure off the length of your link, and then twist the link three or four times. Continue in the same manner down the whole coil. The extra casing at the end of your coil is to compensate for the amount of casing used in twisting. Chances are there will be almost no empty casing by the time you finish. If the links are going to be poached, use some kitchen twine and tie off each link with a knot. If not, cut apart the links.



Sausage is linked by twisting lengths with your fingers.

12. Let the sausage “rest.” Just as roasted meats need time to allow their juices to be reabsorbed, sausages benefit from time to allow the flavors to blend. For bulk sausage, if you can wait even 30 minutes before cooking, they’ll taste even better. For links, refrigerate them overnight to allow the casings to dry; this will result in crisper casings when the sausages cook. Arrange the links on a wire cooling rack placed over a baking sheet, and refrigerate the sausages. This resting period is not as important for sausages that are poached or oven-baked as it is for links cooked with high-heat methods like grilling and broiling.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Here are some problems frequently encountered during this process, and what to do if . . .

The meat grinder stops working. If using the fine blade of a meat grinder, it can get clogged from time to time. Unscrew the cap holding the blade in place, use a metal skewer or toothpick to clean out the clog, wash the plate well with hot water, and replace it onto the meat grinder.

The casing breaks. And this will happen. Sometimes it’s because there was a small tear in the actual casing, and many times you’ll find this out when flushing the casings with water. If that’s the case, just cut it at that point. If it happens when you’re midway through making a coil, stop stuffing immediately, and empty about 3 inches of filled coil. Tie off the coil, and begin again with the portion of casing remaining on the sausage horn. Casing is very inexpensive, so if I’m near the end of one when a rip occurs, I’m just as likely to throw out what’s left and begin with a new

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