

Pumpkin and Sausage Pasta

by Rachael Ray

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus 1 tablespoon
1 pound bulk sweet Italian sausage
4 cloves garlic, cracked and chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 bay leaf, fresh or dried
4 to 6 sprigs sage leaves, cut into chiffonade, about 2 tablespoons
1 cup dry white wine
1 cup chicken stock, canned or paper container
1 cup canned pumpkin
1/2 cup (3 turns around the pan) heavy cream
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg, ground or freshly grated
Coarse salt and black pepper
1 pound penne rigate, cooked to al dente
Romano or Parmigiano, for grating
Pumpernickel or whole grain bread, as an accompaniment

Heat a large, deep nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to the pan and brown the sausage in it. Transfer sausage to paper towel lined plate. Drain fat from skillet and return pan to the stove. Add the remaining tablespoon oil, and then the garlic and onion. Saute 3 to 5 minutes until the onions are tender.

Add bay leaf, sage, and wine to the pan. Reduce wine by half, about 2 minutes. Add stock and pumpkin and stir to combine, stirring sauce until it comes to a bubble. Return sausage to pan, reduce heat, and stir in cream. Season the sauce with the cinnamon and nutmeg, and salt and pepper, to taste. Simmer mixture 5 to 10 minutes to thicken sauce.

Return drained pasta to the pot you cooked it in. Remove the bay leaf from sauce and pour the sausage pumpkin sauce over pasta. Combine sauce and pasta and toss over low heat for 1 minute. Garnish the pasta with lots of shaved cheese and sage leaves.

(Servings: 4, Prep time: none, Cook time: 45 minutes, Difficulty: Easy)