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Turn up the heat...

Penne' with Eggplant Turkey Sausage and Feta

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The Fit Gourmet©

Did you know that at one time, women in the Orient used a black dye made from eggplant to stain their teeth a gun metal gray? The dye probably came from the same dark purple eggplant we see in the marketplace today.



Penne' with Eggplant, Turkey Sausage & Feta

INGREDIENTS:

- 4½ cups cubed peeled eggplant (about 1 pound)
- 1 large yellow pepper, cut into ½ inch pieces
- ½ pound turkey sausage
- 4 garlic cloves, minced



- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano or 1 teaspoon fresh chopped oregano
- ¼-½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 6 cups hot cooked penne (about 10 ounces uncooked tube-shaped pasta)
- ½ cup (2 ounces) crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat cook eggplant, peppers, sausage, and garlic for 5 minutes or until sausage is browned and eggplant and peppers are tender. Add tomato paste, oregano, pepper and diced tomatoes and continue cooking over medium heat 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Place pasta in a large bowl. Add tomato mixture, cheese, and parsley; toss well.

Homemade Turkey Sausage

(8 servings)

- 1/2 pound ground turkey
- 1/4 cup onion - finely chopped
- 1/4 cup dried apples - crumbled or finely chopped (can be replaced by 1/2 cup fresh apple - but not as good)
- 1 egg white - beaten
- 3 Tablespoons quick-cooking oats
- 2 Tablespoon fresh parsley - finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground sage
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 dash ground red pepper
- cooking spray



- Lightly coat a 10-inch skillet with coating spray. Set aside.
- Place three or 4 paper towels on another plate and set aside.
- In a medium bowl, combine the onion, apples, egg white, oats, parsley and all spices. Add the ground turkey and mix well.
- Shape mixture into eight 2-inch wide patties. Preheat the skillet over medium heat. Place patties in skillet. Cook over medium heat for 10 to 12 minutes, turning once until sausage is browned and completely done.
- Transfer patties to paper towel-lined plate to pat of excess grease. Transfer to serving plates and enjoy.

Way better and fresher tasting than the turkey sausage you buy in those crazy tubes.

<http://www.mrbreakfast.com>

Purchasing Eggplant: Smaller, immature eggplants are best. Full-size puffy ones may have hard seeds and can be bitter. Choose a firm, smooth-skinned eggplant that is heavy for its size; avoid those with soft or brown spots. Gently push with your thumb or forefinger. If the flesh gives slightly but then bounces back, it is ripe. If the indentation remains, it is overripe and the insides will be mushy. If there is no give, the eggplant was picked too early. Also make sure an eggplant isn't dry inside, knock on it with your knuckles. If you hear a hollow sound, don't buy it. NOTE: Whether or not there is an appreciable difference, I don't know.

Storing Eggplant: Eggplants are very perishable and become bitter with age. They should be stored in a cool, dry place and used within a day or two of purchase. To store in the refrigerator, place in a plastic bag. If you plan to cook it the same day you buy it, leave it out at room temperature.

Preparing Eggplant: When young, the skin of most eggplants are edible; older eggplants should be peeled. since the flesh discolors rapidly, an eggplant should be cut just before using.

There are many varieties which range from dark purple to pale mauve, and from yellow to white. The longer purple variety is the most commonly eaten. It is one of the more popular vegetables in the world, and it is a staple of Italian cooking throughout Italy. For hundreds of years, it was grown only in Sicily and southern Italy.

It's 'BETTA' with FETA

Feta is a classic and famous Greek curd cheese whose tradition dates back thousands of years and is still made by shepherds in the Greek mountains with unpasteurized milk. It was originally made with goat's or sheep's milk, but today much is often made commercially with pasteurized cow's milk (the firmer cow's milk version is made for export). The curdled milk (curdled with rennet) is separated and allowed to drain in a special mold or a cloth bag. It is cut into large slices (feta means 'slice') that are salted and then packed in barrels filled with whey or brine. Salted and cured in a brine solution (which can be either water or whey) for a week to several months (this is why it is sometimes called a 'pickled' cheese). Feta dries out rapidly when removed from the brine.