

## ZITI WITH ARUGULA, PESTO AND SAUSAGE

Serves 6

Time: 1 hour

*Plan Ahead: Prepare the Pesto Sauce page 44 a day ahead. ½ cup homemade pesto, or store bought.*

- 2 teaspoons coarse salt, for boiling the pasta
- 3 cups (11 oz.) ziti or penne pasta
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2½ Italian mild sausage links (about ½ pound), casings removed
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 14.5 oz. cans diced tomatoes with juice, crushed
- Coarse salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 6 oz. fresh Mozzarella cheese, cubed
- 1 cup fresh Parmesan cheese, grated, divided
- 3 cups fresh arugula or spinach

1. Prepare the pesto first if making homemade. Set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add salt. Add ziti or penne, stir and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat to a rolling boil and cook for 11 min. Drain, saving ½ cup pasta water.
3. While the pasta is cooking, prepare meat sauce. In a large saucepan over medium high heat add the olive oil, sausage, onion and garlic and sauté until the sausage is cooked through, about 10 min., breaking it up into pieces.
4. Blend tomatoes and juice in a food processor or blender and add to the meat sauce. Simmer and stir for about 8 min. Stir in the pesto. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
5. Preheat oven to 375°. In a large bowl combine the pasta, pasta water, sausage-tomato mixture, cubed mozzarella, ½ cup Parmesan cheese, and arugula. Mix.
6. Grease a 13 x 9 inch baking dish with olive oil. Transfer meat/pasta mixture into the baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining ¾ cup Parmesan cheese over all. Bake until sauce bubbles and cheese melts, about 30 min.

**Serve with:** Everyday Artisan Bread page 236 or French Baguettes page 242.

*I love this casserole.  
I like all the different tastes, especially my homemade pesto.  
I added arugula because it adds so much flavor.  
I am an arugula lover!  
This casserole is good enough that you'll want to enjoy it  
for lunch the next day.*