

HOT ITALIAN SAUSAGE BREAKFAST STRATA

Serves 4 - 6

Ingredients:

1 package of Stryker Farm Hot Italian Sausages,
casings removed
6 large eggs
2 1/2 cups whole milk
2 cups sliced scallions
1/2 cup whipping cream
1/2 cup finely grated Romano cheese
2 TBSP chopped fresh herbs; thyme, oregano, sage
1/2 teaspoon salt
a few turns of fresh cracked black pepper
1 large red bell pepper, sliced thinly
1 loaf French bread, cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices
2 cups (loosely packed) coarsely grated Fontina
cheese

A “strata” is an Italian word used for a layered egg casserole. These make fabulous brunch meals because they are fairly easy to assemble, and you can make them with a variety of vegetables and herbs that you have on hand.

Instructions:

1. Start by preheating the oven to 350°F. Generously butter a 13x9x2-inch ceramic or glass baking dish.
2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, cream, scallions, cheese, herbs and spices. Set this aside while you cook the sausage.
3. Put a slit down the middle of the sausage using a small knife. Peel away the casing and place the sausage in a large skillet over high heat. Push the sausage to one side of the pan to make room for the pepper slices.
4. Using a wooden spatula, break up the sausage into small pieces. Don’t break it up too much, it shouldn’t resemble ground beef. Saute the peppers and allow them to brown. They should all be done in about 10 minutes.
5. Now you can begin assembling the layers, or “strata”. Line the butter dish with half of the bread slices. It’s important not to skimp on the bread quality; it should be chewy and have lots of nooks and crannies like a rustic French loaf. Add half the egg mixture, half the grated cheese, and half of the sausage and peppers.
6. Repeat the layers to use up all the ingredients.

7. Allow the strata to stand for about 20 minutes. This allows the bread to soak up the eggs. At this point, if you're expecting guests you could put the strata in the fridge until you're ready to bake it.
8. Bake the strata for an hour at 350°F. It should look puffed and slightly brown. If you're unsure insert a knife into the middle, if it comes out clean, it's ready to go!

The mild fontina cheese melts and gets a golden brown topping which compliments the spicy sausage.