

Italian Sausage & Fennel Skillet with Parmesan Polenta

Servings: 2 | **Prep Time:** 8 minutes | **Cook Time:** 15 minutes | **Total Time:** 23 minutes

This Italian sausage and fennel skillet served over creamy Parmesan polenta is a cozy, restaurant-style dinner you can make at home in under 25 minutes. Savory sausage, sweet caramelized fennel, and silky polenta come together in one satisfying, comforting meal that feels fancy without being complicated. Perfect for quick weeknights or relaxed weekend dinners.

Why You'll Love This Recipe

- Classic Italian flavors with minimal ingredients
- Quick & comforting — ready in under 25 minutes
- Perfect balance of savory sausage and sweet fennel
- Creamy polenta that feels indulgent but simple
- Easy to customize with vegetables or sausage swaps

Ingredients

Sausage Skillet

- ½ lb Italian sausage (mild or spicy)
- ½ fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- ½ onion, thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt & black pepper, to taste

Parmesan Polenta

- 1 cup instant polenta
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp butter
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Pinch of salt

Ingredient Notes & Substitutions

- **Italian sausage:** Pork adds the most flavor, but turkey or chicken sausage works well.
- **Fennel:** Cooking mellows its licorice flavor and brings out sweetness — don't skip it.
- **Instant polenta:** Ideal for weeknights. Stone-ground polenta needs longer cooking.
- **Parmesan:** Freshly grated melts best and adds a rich, salty finish.

Instructions

Step 1: Cook the sausage

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage (remove casing if needed) and break into bite-sized pieces. Cook 4–5 minutes until browned and mostly cooked through.

Step 2: Add fennel, onion & garlic

Add fennel, onion, and garlic. Cook 6–7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and lightly caramelized.

Step 3: Season

Season with salt and black pepper. Optional: add a pinch of red pepper flakes.

Step 4: Prepare the polenta

Bring water or broth to a boil. Slowly whisk in instant polenta. Reduce heat to low and whisk 2–3 minutes until thick and smooth.

Step 5: Finish the polenta

Stir in butter, Parmesan, and a pinch of salt. Continue stirring until creamy, then remove from heat.

Step 6: Serve

Spoon polenta into bowls and top with sausage and fennel mixture. Serve immediately while warm.

Tips for Best Results

- Slice fennel thinly so it softens evenly.
- If polenta thickens too much, add warm water or broth.
- Taste before serving — sausage salt levels vary.

Storage & Reheating

Refrigerator: Store leftovers in airtight containers for up to 3 days.

Reheat: Warm gently on the stovetop or microwave, adding liquid to loosen polenta.

Variations & Add-Ins

- Add cherry tomatoes or spinach during the last 2 minutes
- Deglaze the pan with a splash of white wine before vegetables
- Swap Parmesan for pecorino for sharper flavor
- Use plant-based sausage for a vegetarian option

Serving Suggestions

- Roasted broccoli or green beans
- Simple mixed green salad
- Crusty bread for scooping polenta