

Italian Sausage Sandwich

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Prep time 60 minutes

Cooking time 3 1/2 hours

Ingredients:

3 to 4 pounds of Hilltop Pastures short ribs

2 green bell peppers

2 red bell peppers

2 large onions

4-6 tablespoons olive oil

4 (6" long) slices from a long skinny loaf of Italian bread or 2 oblong Italian bread rolls

Optional toppings. *If you like, you can top it with marinara sauce, and/or shredded mozzarella, and melt it on indirect heat on the grill or under a broiler. But never use mustard.*

About the olive oil. *That's about twice as much as you think you need, but in Chicago they load up the sandwich and make sure plenty of the oil gets on the bread and sausage. If there's any of this flavorful elixir left, fry your eggs in it the next morning.*

About the bread. *Italian bread is a spongy high gluten loaf with a medium hard crust. You can cut it from a large loaf, or buy it in pre-formed rolls*

Do this

1) Take the sausages out of the fridge and let them sit at room temp for about 15 minutes so the skins warm a bit. This helps keep them from splitting and dumping oil on the fire causing flare-ups and soot on the food.

2) Split the peppers in half cutting through the stem. Pull out the stem and the seedpod. Rinse it inside and out. Cut lengthwise into 1/4" strips. Set aside. Slice the onion in half, pole to pole. Peel off the skin and the tough outer layer. Lay them on the cutting board cut side down and slice off the top and discard. Keep slicing across the layers making half moons working towards the root. Discard the root.

3) Heat the grill to medium high, about 325°F to 350°F, and leave the lid open. Put an 8 to 12" frying pan on the heat, add the olive oil, and swirl to cover the bottom. Add the peppers and onions. Stir to coat with oil.

Note. You can grill the peppers and onions if you wish, and that's how I usually do it, although it is not exactly traditional. You can cook the peppers and onions a day in advance, indoors if you wish, and just warm them before serving.

4) The sausages are pretty curved. Bend them gently to try and straighten them slightly, but take care not to break the skin. Lay them on the grill between the rungs of the grate. I know this seems weird, usually you lay them across the grates. But if you lay them between the rungs, you can roll them from rung to rung, making a 1/4 turn each roll, and get each side nice and dark brown with some dark grill marks, and you won't burn them. The stripes will look goofy running lengthwise, but nobody will argue with the results. Cook with the lid open so you can watch them to prevent burning. Do not poke them to drain the fat! This just dries them out and causes flare-ups and soot. Cook until they are 160°F in the center to be safe. There should be no pink. If you cook them longer they can dry out. Usually they are well cooked after 2 or 3 sides are browned.

5) While they are cooking, stir the peppers and onions and cook until wilted, slightly browned, but not burned. You can take them off and let them sit at room temp when they are done.

6) If you wish, you can split the buns and toast them. Most folks don't. Just nestle the sausage in, top liberally with peppers and onions, make sure some flavorful oil gets into the bread, and serve.