

Crock Pot Dirty Rice

Do you ever stock up on meat when it's on sale and freeze it, only to then have to come up with a meal that specifically uses that "great deal" before it gets freezer burnt?! Yeah, that's what I'm going through today. I thawed out a package of sweet italian ground sausage. I'm sure I bought it with some sort of intention... but then it got buried in the freezer under half a dozen packages of frozen vegetables. After making winter vegetable soup, I found my meat stash and now had to face the task of figuring out what to make with the ground sausage.

Normally, you can substitute ground sausage in most ground beef or ground turkey recipes. It makes great chili, an incredible lasagna and even is creative in meatloaf. But I wanted to work on a recipe that truly highlighted the spices of the sweet italian sausage. You can use any variety of sausage, just understand that the flavors will ultimately completely change up the overall dish— so if you want hot sausage or you want to un-case a beer bratwurst, that's totally fine. You can play with the flavors by changing up your meat selection— or using up something you find in the bottom of your freezer!

So tonight, we're having crock pot dirty rice. I love that this dish uses the word "dirty", but it's so true. This is the antithesis of steamed, white rice. It muddles together all the flavors from the spicy meat and the sweet vegetables and somehow the tomato paste marries it all together. Yes, that's what this is— a "dirty" "marriage" of flavors. Ha! I hope you enjoy this classic spicy one-pot meal and that it warms up your winter night.

1 lb sausage, crumbled and browned

3 cups water

1 cup uncooked long grain rice

1/2 large onion, finely chopped

1/2 large red bell pepper, finely chopped

1/2 large yellow bell pepper, finely chopped

3 stalks finely chopped celery

1 15 oz. can kidney beans, not drained

1 6 oz. can tomato paste

1 beef bouillion cube

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp red pepper flakes

1 T. chopped fresh parsley

Brown meat and put in crock pot first. Then using same pan, brown onions and peppers until soft, then add to crock pot. Add remaining ingredients, except for parsley. Stir. Cook on low for 4 hours. Serve into bowls and sprinkle with fresh parsley.