Turkey Sausage
By Andrew Lewis

Turkey sausages are great with a cooked breakfast or mashed potatoes and gravy. I made this sausage to use up some turkey mince that I didn’t know what to do with. I was initially worried because turkey meat has a low fat content, which is usually bad news for sausage or burger recipes. Surprisingly, the mixture was perfectly balanced, and the reaction from my family was so good that I’ve since made the sausage a regular addition to my schedule of charcuterie.

Ingredients
1 lb of turkey meat — leg or thigh meat is perfect
1½ cups of Rice Krispies
1 medium onion
1 tbsp dried parsley
1 tbsp dried basil
2 tsp soy flour or corn starch
1 tsp dried thyme
½ tsp salt
½ tsp crushed black pepper
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
1 vegetable stock cube
¼ hank of hog or sheep casings (optional)
Bread crumbs (optional)

Supplies
Meat mincer
Mortar and pestle A food processor, coffee grinder, or some good old-fashioned elbow grease will also do the trick.
Sausage filler If you don't have a sausage filler, you can roll the meat into sausage shapes by hand. Personally, I recommend spending a little cash on one. The machines can be purchased for well under $100, and will allow you to produce professional-quality skinned sausages with a minimum of effort.

Method for Making Sausage Meat
Step 1: Add the dried herbs, spices, corn starch, and vegetable stock cube to a mortar and pestle and grind together. This mixture is the sausage seasoning, so make sure the herbs are well-mixed and finely ground.
Step 2: Using the meat mincer, process the turkey meat and onion into a large bowl.
Step 3: Add the Rice Krispies and mixed herbs to the mincemeat and mix together by hand. I find that a pair of disposable gloves are very useful when I’m mixing by hand.
Step 4: Put the whole mixture back through the mincer. This will improve the texture of the finished sausage, and will help to distribute the herbs evenly throughout the meat.
Step 5: Shape the sausages, either with your sausage filler or by hand. A light coating of bread crumbs will stop the sausages from sticking to each other.

Method for Filling Sausage Skins
Step 6: Choose your sausage casings. Hog casings are bigger than sheep casings, and will make a thicker sausage. Hog casings are also less fragile than sheep casings, and will be more forgiving if you have never used a sausage filler before.
Step 7: Soak the casings. Sausage casings are usually preserved in salt, and need to be soaked in a bowl of water for about 2 hours before you use them.

Author’s Note
While some people might be squeamish about working with meat in this way, I believe it is much better to make your own products than to blindly buy processed meats. If you make the food yourself, then you know exactly what ingredients have been used.
Be gentle with the casings, because they are essentially a large and impossible knot waiting to happen. Allow the casings to relax into the water, and then carefully find the end. A light hand is essential. Pulling on the wrong part of the tangle will cause nothing but grief and frustration.

**Step 8:** Load the meat into the machine. The sausage machine is really just a large syringe, designed to force a big lump of meat out of a small nozzle. You’ll need to make sure there is no air trapped in the sausage filler, or your sausages will end up like large, meaty balloons. Throwing the meat into the filler and then punching it down is the best way to reduce the chance of air pockets, but it does require a reasonable throwing arm. Nobody likes a face full of unexpected raw sausage meat, so check the line of fire before you start throwing!

**Step 9:** Slide the casings onto the nozzle at the end of the machine. Wet the nozzle first, and then start sliding the casing gently onto the machine. Remember that the casings are fragile and will tangle easily. Tease any knots apart with your fingertips before they happen.

**Step 10:** Start filling the casings. Apply a little pressure to the handle on the sausage machine, and allow any air to escape from the nozzle. When the meat starts to extrude from the nozzle, hold the end of the casing closed while the first few inches fill with meat. Now, pull the casings forward on the nozzle, and keep a gentle pressure on the handle of the machine. Use your thumb and finger to control the rate at which the casings pull away from the nozzle, and use the pressure on the handle to control the speed that the meat is forced out of the nozzle. Remember that you will need to link the sausages later, so do not fill the casings to the bursting point. The filled casings should be flexible, not stuffed full.

**Step 11:** Link the casings into sausages. This is quite a difficult process to explain, and causes a lot of confusion to people the first time that they try to link sausages. Start by making a loop of the sausage slightly longer than two finished sausages will be. Hold the loop closed with your thumb, and then pull another long length of sausage through the loop. Now press the top of the loop closed with your thumb and twist. Repeat, pulling another length of sausage through the loop you just made.

The process itself is a lot less complicated than the explanation makes it sound, and a YouTube search for “linking sausages” should set you on the right track if this explanation doesn’t make any sense to you.

**Step 12:** Hang the sausages on a hook somewhere cold for a couple of hours to let them set. The meat will relax and settle more evenly into the skins, and the resulting sausages will have a better shape.

**Step 13:** Cut the sausages into suitably sized portions, and store in the freezer. I find that 6 sheep casing sausages or 3 hog casing sausages are a good size for a freezer pack.