

# Country Grits and Sausage Casserole

To punch up flavor, use one pound of mild sausage and one pound of hot sausage in this casserole. If you're really brave, use hot sausage exclusively!

Yield: 10 servings

2 pounds mild ground pork sausage	1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
4 cups water	1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
1 1/4 cups quick-cooking grits, uncooked	4 large eggs, lightly beaten
4 cups (1 lb) shredded sharp Cheddar cheese	Paprika
1 cup milk	Garnish: fresh parsley sprigs

Brown sausage in a large skillet, stirring until it crumbles. Drain well, and set aside.

Bring water to a boil in a large saucepan, and stir in grits. Return to a boil; cover, reduce heat, and simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; add cheese and next 3 ingredients, stirring until cheese melts. Stir in sausage and eggs.

Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 13" x 9" x 2" baking dish; sprinkle with paprika. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 1 hour or until golden and heated. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Garnish, if desired.

Make-Ahead: Prepare grits mixture as directed above, but do not bake. Cover and chill overnight. Remove from refrigerator; let stand, covered 30 minutes. Uncover and bake as directed.