Main dishes / United States

Spinach and Ricotta Stuffed Shells

Jumbo pasta shells packed with a lemony ricotta-spinach filling, nestled in a quick garlic-basil tomato sauce and baked under a blanket of bubbling, browned mozzarella. Creamy, cheesy, and deeply comforting.

Time 75 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 30 ml Olive oil
- ☐ 4 cloves Garlic, thinly sliced
- ☐ 0.25 tsp Red pepper flakes
- ☐ 800 g Crushed tomatoes
- ☐ 10 leaves Fresh basil
- ☐ 250 g Jumbo pasta shells (about 24)
- ☐ 450 g Whole-milk ricotta
- ☐ 280 g Frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed very dry
- ☐ 1 whole Egg, large
- ☐ 50 g Parmesan-style hard cheese (vegetarian rennet), grated
- ☐ 1 tsp Lemon zest
- ☐ 0.25 tsp Nutmeg, freshly grated
- ☐ 200 g Low-moisture mozzarella, shredded
- ☐ 0 to taste Kosher salt and black pepper

Let's make it.

01 Warm the olive oil in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and pepper flakes and cook 1–2 minutes until the garlic is pale gold. Add the crushed tomatoes, basil, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper. Simmer gently 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 375°F (190°C).

02 Boil the shells in a large pot of salted water for 2 minutes less than the package time (usually 7–8 minutes). Drain gently, rinse with cool water, and lay them open-side down on an oiled tray so they don't stick together. Cook a few extra — some always tear.

03 In a bowl, mix the ricotta, squeezed spinach, egg, grated hard cheese, lemon zest, nutmeg, 80 g of the mozzarella, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper until evenly combined. Taste before adding the egg if you want to check seasoning.

04 Spread two-thirds of the sauce over the bottom of a 23 x 33 cm baking dish. Fill each shell with about 2 tablespoons of filling and nestle them open-side up in a snug single layer. Spoon the remaining sauce over and between the shells.

05 Scatter the remaining 120 g mozzarella over the top. Cover with foil and bake at 375°F (190°C) for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 10–15 minutes more until the cheese is bubbling and spotted brown. Rest 10 minutes before serving so the filling sets.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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