

Spinach & Ricotta-Stuffed Shells

with Tomato Sauce & Romaine Chopped Salad

Warming, wholesome stuffed shells are a fixture in many Italian-American homes. They're the perfect dinner to prepare together: everyone can join in stuffing the shell-shaped pasta with its traditional cheesy filling (ours is made with ricotta and sautéed spinach). To ensure the most delicious results possible, we're draining the spinach before making the filling, a technique that enhances its texture and green flavor. A simple, savory tomato sauce and basil garnish complete this classic.



Ingredients

- 10 Ounces Jumbo Pasta Shells
- 1 28-Ounce Can Crushed Tomatoes
- 2 Cups Part-Skim Ricotta Cheese
- 4 Cloves Garlic
- 1 Cucumber
- 1 Lemon
- 1 Romaine Heart
- 1 Pound Spinach
- 1 Yellow Onion
- 1 Bunch Basil

Knick Knacks

- 1 Shallot
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Grated Parmesan Cheese

Makes 4 Servings

About 550 Calories Per Serving

Prep Time: 10 min | Cook Time: 35 to 45 min



1



Prepare the ingredients:

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Wash and dry the fresh produce. Heat a large pot of salted water to boiling on high. Peel and small dice the onion. Peel and mince the garlic. Cut off and discard the lettuce root; roughly chop. Halve the cucumber lengthwise; scoop out and discard the seeds, then thinly slice crosswise. Pick the basil off the stems; discard the stems. Quarter and deseed the lemon. Peel and mince the shallot to get 2 tablespoons of minced shallot (you may have extra); place in a bowl with **the juice of all 4 lemon wedges**.

2



Cook & drain the spinach:

In a large pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add the **spinach**; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 4 minutes, or until the spinach has wilted. (If necessary, work in batches.) Transfer to a strainer; hold or rest the strainer over a bowl. Using a spoon, press down on the cooked spinach to release as much liquid as possible; discard the liquid. Transfer to a cutting board to cool slightly. When cool enough to handle, finely chop. Transfer to a large bowl. Wipe out the pan.

3



Make the sauce:

In the pan used to cook the spinach, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add the **onion** and **2/3 of the garlic**; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, 1 to 2 minutes, or until softened. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the **crushed tomatoes**; season with salt and pepper. Simmer, stirring occasionally, 6 to 8 minutes, or until slightly reduced in volume. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper to taste.

4



Cook the shells & make the filling:

While the sauce simmers, add the **pasta shells** to the pot of boiling water. Cook 8 to 10 minutes, or until almost tender. (The shells should still be slightly firm.) Drain thoroughly and set aside to cool slightly. To the bowl of **chopped spinach**, add the **ricotta cheese**, **half the Parmesan cheese** and the **remaining garlic**. Stir to thoroughly combine; season with salt and pepper to taste.

5



Stuff & bake the shells:

Spread a **layer of the sauce** into the bottom of a baking dish. When cool enough to handle, working 1 at a time, fill each **cooked pasta shell** with a large spoonful of the **filling**. Place the stuffed shells, opening sides down, into the baking dish. Evenly top with the **remaining sauce and Parmesan cheese**. Bake 11 to 13 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbling and the cheese is lightly browned. Remove from the oven and let stand for 2 minutes.

6



Make the salad & serve your dish:

While the shells bake, season the **shallot-lemon juice mixture** with salt and pepper to taste. Slowly whisk in **2 tablespoons of olive oil** until well combined. Just before serving, in a large bowl, combine the **lettuce**, **cucumber** and **half the basil** (tearing just before adding). Add as much of the **dressing** as you'd like (you may have extra). Toss to combine; season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a serving dish. Garnish the **baked pasta shells** with the **remaining basil** (tearing just before adding). Enjoy!