

Mediterranean-Style Meat-Stuffed Calamari in Rich Tomato Sauce

Stuffed Calamari with Meat and Tomato Sauce



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15 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the Stuffed Calamari (Serves 4):

- 8 squid tubes (fresh or thawed if frozen)
- 300g (10.5 oz) ground beef or lamb
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tomato, peeled and diced
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh basil (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 slice of stale bread, crumbled (or 2 tbsp breadcrumbs)
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp grated Parmesan (optional)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

For the Tomato Sauce:

- 400g (14 oz) canned peeled tomatoes or tomato sauce
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp sugar (optional, to reduce acidity)
- Fresh basil leaves, for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the Calamari: Clean squid tubes: remove heads, beaks, and innards if using fresh. Peel off skin. Rinse thoroughly and pat dry with paper towels. (Optional: Keep the tentacles to chop and add to the filling or save for another dish.)
2. Make the Filling: In a skillet, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic until translucent. Add ground meat and cook until browned. Season with salt, pepper, parsley, and basil. Add diced tomato and cook for 2-3 more minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in crumbled bread (or breadcrumbs), beaten egg, and Parmesan (if using). Mix until well combined. Let cool slightly.
3. Stuff the Calamari: Using a small spoon, fill each squid tube about $\frac{3}{4}$ full with the meat mixture. Seal each with a toothpick or kitchen twine to prevent bursting.
4. Make the Tomato Sauce: In another skillet, heat 2 tbsp olive oil. Add sliced onion and sauté until soft. Add canned tomatoes or tomato sauce. Season with salt, pepper, and sugar if needed. Simmer over low heat for 10-15 minutes.
5. Cook the Stuffed Calamari: In a large skillet, heat a bit of olive oil and sear the stuffed squid on all sides until golden, about 3-4 minutes. Pour the tomato sauce over the calamari. Cover and simmer over low heat for 25-30 minutes, turning the calamari halfway through for even cooking.
6. Serve: Transfer the stuffed squid to a serving platter. Spoon the tomato sauce over the top. Garnish with fresh basil leaves if desired. Serve hot with rice, pasta, or grilled vegetables.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't overstuff the squid-they shrink slightly during cooking and could burst.

Let the filling cool before stuffing-it helps the mixture hold together.

Add a touch of anchovy paste or chopped tentacles to the filling.

Add a splash of white wine or broth while simmering. ?

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