

## Hearty Stuffed Shells with Meat and Cheese - The Perfect Baked Pasta

Stuffed Shells with Meat: A Cozy, Cheesy Classic



OVEN  
**350°F**

TIME  
**9 min**

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SAVE  
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### INGREDIENTS

For the Filling:

- 1 pound ground chuck
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 cups small curd cottage cheese (4% milk fat)
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, freshly shredded, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated, divided

For the Sauce and Pasta:

- 26 oz jar of marinara sauce (or homemade)
- 20 jumbo pasta shells (about 7 oz), cooked al dente
- Chopped fresh basil, optional for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat and Prep:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with nonstick spray and set aside.
- 2. Cook Pasta Shells:** Boil the shells in salted water until al dente (8-9 minutes). Drain and lay upside down on a baking sheet to cool and dry.
- 3. Brown the Beef:** In a large skillet, cook the ground chuck over medium heat until browned and no pink remains (5-7 minutes). Drain excess fat.
- 4. Saut  Aromatics:** Reduce heat to medium-low. Add olive oil, then saut  the onion until translucent (about 3 minutes). Add garlic and cook another 30 seconds.
- 5. Make the Sauce:** Add marinara sauce to the skillet and simmer on low, uncovered, for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 6. Prepare the Cheese Mixture:** In a bowl, mix together the egg, cottage cheese, 1 cup mozzarella, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Parmesan cheese.
- 7. Assemble the Dish:** Spoon  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the meat sauce into the bottom of the baking dish. Fill each shell with about 1 rounded tablespoon of the cheese filling and arrange open-side-up over the sauce. Spoon the remaining sauce in between the shells.
- 8. Bake:** Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle with the remaining 1 cup mozzarella and ... cup Parmesan. Bake uncovered for 5-7 more minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly.
- 9. Garnish and Serve:** Sprinkle with fresh basil if desired, and serve hot with garlic bread or a crisp green salad.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't overcook the shells -al dente is best so they don't fall apart when filling.

Let the shells cool before stuffing for easier handling.

Use ricotta instead of cottage cheese for a more traditional filling.

Add a pinch of nutmeg or fresh parsley to the filling for extra flavor.

**More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)**

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/hearty-stuffed-shells-with-meat-and-cheese-the-perfect-baked-pasta/>