

Creamy Ricotta Beef Stuffed Shells Pasta: Classic Comfort

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OVEN
375°F

TIME
1 min

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SAVE
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INGREDIENTS

- 20 large pasta shells (jumbo pasta shells)
- 1 lb lean ground beef (or 80/20 for more flavor)
- 1 cup ricotta cheese (full-fat for creaminess)
- 1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- ¼ cup grated Romano cheese (Pecorino Romano is best)
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 ½ cups tomato basil sauce (your favorite jarred or homemade)
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Swaps and Notes:

Pasta Shells: Jumbo pasta shells are ideal for stuffing. Make sure to cook them just al dente so they are pliable but don't break.

Ground Beef: Lean ground beef is great, but 80/20 ground beef will add more flavor. You can substitute with ground Italian sausage (mild or hot, casing removed) for a different twist.

Ricotta Cheese: Full-fat ricotta provides the best creaminess. Drain any excess liquid from ricotta if it seems watery.

Mozzarella Cheese: Freshly shredded mozzarella melts more smoothly than pre-shredded (which often contains anti-caking agents).

Romano Cheese: Pecorino Romano cheese offers a sharp, salty flavor. Grated Parmesan cheese can be substituted.

Tomato Basil Sauce: Use a good quality jarred tomato basil sauce you love, or homemade if you have it. My Classic Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce is a great starting point for a homemade sauce.

Egg: The egg acts as a binder for the filling, helping it hold together.

Herbs: Dried oregano is classic. A pinch of dried basil can also be added. Fresh parsley for garnish adds freshness.

DIRECTIONS

1. Creating these delicious stuffed shells is a satisfying process that yields a wonderful baked pasta dish.
2. Preheat : Oven: Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).
3. Cook : Pasta: Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Add the large pasta shells and cook according to package directions until they are al dente (just firm enough to hold their shape, but not mushy). Drain the shells thoroughly and lay them out on a clean baking sheet or parchment paper in a single layer to prevent sticking. Set aside.
4. Prepare : Beef & Aromatics: In a large skillet, heat a drizzle of olive oil over medium heat. Add the lean ground beef and cook, breaking it apart with a spoon as it browns, until it is fully cooked through and no longer pink. Drain off any excess grease. Add the minced garlic and dried oregano to the browned beef. Cook for about 1 minute, stirring constantly, until fragrant. Remove the skillet from heat and let the beef mixture cool slightly.
5. Combine : Filling: In a large mixing bowl, combine the slightly cooled browned beef mixture with the 1 cup ricotta cheese, 1 cup of the shredded mozzarella cheese, ½ cup grated Romano cheese, and the beaten large egg. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Mix everything together thoroughly until well combined.
6. Stuff and : Assemble: Spread 1 cup of the tomato basil sauce evenly over the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish. Take each cooked pasta shell and carefully fill it with a generous amount of the beef and cheese mixture. Arrange the filled pasta shells in a single

layer in the prepared baking dish.

7. **Sauce & : Top with Cheese:** Pour the remaining 1 1/2 cups of tomato basil sauce evenly over the arranged stuffed shells, ensuring most of them are covered with sauce. Sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese evenly over the top of the shells.
8. **Bake:** Cover the baking dish tightly with aluminum foil. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 30 minutes.
9. **Golden : Finish:** Remove the foil from the baking dish. Bake for an additional 10 minutes, or until the mozzarella cheese on top is golden brown and bubbly. For extra browning, you can briefly place it under the broiler (watch very carefully to prevent burning!).
10. **Serve:** Garnish generously with fresh chopped parsley. Serve warm and enjoy your delicious Creamy Ricotta Beef Stuffed Shells Pasta!

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