

Stuffed Cheese Shells: A Comforting Classic for Any Occasion

Here's what you'll need to create these delectable stuffed cheese shells:



TIME

8-10 min

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SAVE

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INGREDIENTS

to create these delectable stuffed cheese shells:

For the Pasta Shells: 1 (12-ounce) box jumbo pasta shells (about 25-30 shells) 1 tablespoon olive oil (for tossing cooked shells) Salt for pasta water:

For the Sauce: 1 (24-ounce) jar marinara sauce (your favorite brand) 1/2 cup water (or red wine for extra flavor):

DIRECTIONS

1. directions until al dente, usually about 8-10 minutes. It's crucial not to overcook them, as they will continue to cook in the oven. They should be firm enough to handle without tearing.
2. Drain the shells and immediately rinse them with cold water to stop the cooking process and prevent them from sticking together. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and gently toss. Set aside.
3. Make the : Cheese Filling:
4. In a large bowl, combine the whole milk ricotta cheese,
5. 5 cups of the shredded mozzarella cheese, 1/2 cup of grated Parmesan cheese, the lightly beaten egg, chopped fresh parsley, garlic powder, salt, black pepper, and optional pinch of nutmeg.
6. Mix all ingredients thoroughly until well combined and the mixture is uniform.
7. Prepare the : Baking Dish:
8. Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).
9. Spread about
10. 5 cups of the marinara sauce evenly over the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish. Stir in the 1/2 cup of water (or red wine) into the remaining marinara sauce in the jar, shaking to combine, then set aside.
11. Stuff the : Shells:
12. Carefully pick up each cooked pasta shell. Using a small spoon (or a piping bag with the corner snipped off for less mess), generously fill each shell with the cheese mixture. Aim for about
13. 5 to 2 tablespoons of filling per shell, depending on its size.

14. Arrange the filled shells in a single layer in the prepared baking dish, open-side up. Nestle them closely together.
15. Add : Remaining Sauce and Bake:
16. Pour the remaining marinara sauce (mixed with water/wine) evenly over the stuffed shells in the baking dish. Ensure all the shells are coated with sauce.
17. Sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup of shredded mozzarella cheese and a little extra grated Parmesan cheese over the top of the shells.
18. Cover the baking dish tightly with aluminum foil.
19. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbly and the shells are heated through.
20. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 5-10 minutes, or until the cheese on top is melted and slightly golden brown. If you desire a more browned and crispy top, you can briefly broil for 1-2 minutes, watching carefully to prevent burning.
21. Rest and : Serve:
22. Remove the baking dish from the oven and let it rest for 5-10 minutes before serving. This allows the cheeses to set slightly and makes for easier serving.

SWAPS & NOTES

Ricotta Cheese: Whole milk ricotta provides a creamier, richer filling.

If you only have part-skim, it will still work, but the texture might be slightly less luxurious.

For an even richer filling, consider adding 1/4 cup of mascarpone cheese.

Mozzarella and Parmesan: Freshly shredded mozzarella and grated Parmesan cheese will melt better and offer superior flavor compared to pre-shredded varieties.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overcook Pasta: Undercook the shells slightly during the boiling stage.

They should be al dente, as they will finish cooking in the oven and you don't want them mushy.

Rinse with Cold Water: Rinsing the cooked shells with cold water is crucial to stop the cooking and prevent them from sticking.

Drain Ricotta (Optional): If your ricotta seems particularly watery, you can drain it in a fine-mesh sieve lined with cheesecloth for 30 minutes to an hour in the refrigerator.

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

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