

Meatloaf and Cheddar Shells Casserole: The Ultimate Comfort Food

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OVEN
350°F

TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 can (10.75 oz) condensed tomato soup
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 oz medium pasta shells, cooked and drained

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat :** Oven: Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray or butter.
- 2. Prepare the :** Meatloaf Layer: In a mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, breadcrumbs, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper. Use your hands to mix everything together until it's well combined. Be careful not to overmix, as this can make the meatloaf tough.
- 3. Press into the :** Dish: Press the meatloaf mixture evenly into the bottom of the prepared baking dish, creating a firm and even layer.
- 4. Prepare the :** Cheddar Shells Layer: In a separate bowl, mix together the cooked and drained pasta shells, shredded cheddar cheese, condensed tomato soup, and milk until everything is well combined.
- 5. Spread over :** Meatloaf: Spread the cheddar shells mixture evenly over the meatloaf layer in the baking dish.
- 6. Bake the :** Casserole: Cover the baking dish tightly with aluminum foil and place it in the preheated oven. Bake for 30 minutes.
- 7. Finish :** Baking: Remove the foil and continue baking for an additional 10-15 minutes, or until the casserole is bubbly and the cheese on top is melted.
- 8. Serve:** Allow the casserole to cool for about 5-10 minutes before serving. This helps it set and makes it much easier to scoop out clean portions.

SWAPS & NOTES

Ground Meat : While ground beef is a classic choice, you can easily swap it for ground turkey, pork, or a mix of beef and pork for a different flavor profile.

Cheese : Shredded cheddar cheese is a perfect choice for its sharp, savory flavor and melting ability.

You could also use a Mexican blend, Monterey Jack, or even some shredded Gruyère for a more complex taste.

Pasta : Medium pasta shells are perfect for this dish as they hold the cheesy sauce beautifully.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overmix the Meat : When combining the meatloaf ingredients, mix just until everything is incorporated.

Overmixing can result in a tough, dense meatloaf.

Cook Pasta Al Dente : Make sure you cook your pasta to al dente.

Since it will continue to cook in the oven, you don't want it to become mushy.

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

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