



Pork Stuffed Shells

Servings: 8

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 2 hours

The pork stuffing is a surprise to anyone expecting the traditional ricotta filling. The buttery balsamella coated the pork with a smooth and decadent sauce.

PARBOIL:

24 each pasta, shells, jumbo (conchiglioni)

BALSAMELLA:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/4 cup flour

2 1/4 cups milk

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, freshly grated

salt and white pepper, to taste

COOK:

1 cup onions, diced fine

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon garlic, minced

1 pound ground pork

1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped

STIR IN:

1/4 cup sherry (see NOTES)

salt, to taste

red pepper flakes, to taste

32 ounces pasta sauce, tomato/basil (divided)

1 cup Romano cheese, shredded

1/2 cup fresh basil, thinly sliced

These stuffed shells are simple to prepare and perfect make-ahead fare. And while stuffing pasta might seem a bit fussy, jumbo shells make things easy. Cook the shells until they're just pliable enough to work with, but not too long since they'll finish baking in the oven. After stuffing the shells with the pork filling, lay them in a bed of aromatic tomato sauce — it's the perfect match for the rich and creamy, meat-filled shells. At this point, you can cover the dish with foil and refrigerate up to two days. The shells may take a little longer than directed to bake, so test one before serving them.

NOTE: Adding sherry to the pork mixture balances its richness. Be sure to use a good quality dry sherry that's aged, not a sweet or cooking sherry.



BALSAMELLA (12 minutes):

Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in flour and cook 1 minute.

Whisk in milk and nutmeg, bring sauce to a simmer, then reduce heat to low and cook until thick, whisking occasionally, 10 minutes.

Season Balsamella with salt and white pepper.

PARBOIL (13 minutes):

Parboil shells in a pot of boiling salted water until pliable, 7 minutes

Drain, rinse with cold water, then drain again.

FILLING (20 minutes + 15 minutes to cool):

Preheat oven to 400°.

Cook onions in oil in a skillet over medium heat until softened, 4 minutes.

Add garlic; cook until fragrant, 1 minute.

Add pork and rosemary; cook until browned, crushing pork with a potato masher until fine, 8–10 minutes.

Stir in sherry and cook until nearly evaporated, 5 minutes; season with salt and pepper flakes, let cool completely, then stir in Balsamella.

PREP DISH & BAKE (35 minutes + 5 minutes to rest):

Spread 3 cups tomato sauce in the bottom of a 3-quart baking dish.

Divide pork mixture among shells.

Arrange on top of sauce, cover with foil, and bake 15 minutes.

Remove foil, sprinkle shells with Romano, and bake until cheese is golden, 15 minutes

Let rest 5 minutes, then garnish with basil, and serve with remaining 1 cup tomato sauce.

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