

Foodnity Recipes

Vegetable Stuffed Shells with Tomato Basil Sauce

25 min Prep time	**45 min** Cook time	**1 h 10 min** Total time
6 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

Pasta and Filling

- [ ] 12 large pasta shells
- [ ] 1 cup ricotta cheese
- [ ] 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- [ ] 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- [ ] 2 cups fresh spinach, chopped
- [ ] 1/2 cup diced onion
- [ ] 2 cloves garlic, minced
- [ ] 1 cup diced cherry tomatoes
- [ ] 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

Tomato Basil Sauce

- [ ] 1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes
- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 tsp dried oregano
- [ ] 1/4 tsp sugar
- [ ] Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. First things first, let's get that oven warming up to 375°F (190°C). While that's happening, bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Toss in your 12 large pasta shells and cook them until they're just al dente—usually about 5 minutes. Honestly, don't overcook them here, or they'll get too soft later. Drain them in a colander and just set them aside for a bit.

2. Grab a large skillet and heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Sauté your 1/2 cup diced onion until they look translucent and soft, then stir in the 2 cloves garlic, minced. Just give it another minute—you only want the garlic fragrant, not burnt.

3. Now, stir in those 2 cups fresh spinach, chopped, and let it cook until it's all wilted down, which takes about 2 minutes. Take the skillet off the heat and let it cool just a smidge. Now comes the good part: mix in your 1 cup ricotta cheese, 1 cup shredded mozzarella, 1/2 cup grated Parmesan, 1 cup diced cherry tomatoes, and 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil. Season it all with salt, pepper, 1 tsp dried oregano, and 1/4 tsp sugar. Well, just a pinch of sugar really brings the flavor together.

4. In a separate saucepan, heat the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Pour in that 1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes and add a pinch of salt and pepper. Let it simmer gently for about 10 minutes. Right at the end, stir in some more of your chopped fresh basil and adjust the seasoning until it tastes just right.

5. Lightly oil your baking dish so nothing sticks. Arrange your cooked pasta shells in a single layer on the bottom, then pour a thin layer of that lovely tomato sauce over them. Now, carefully spoon generous amounts of the ricotta-spinach mixture into each shell—don't be shy!—and top the whole thing off with more sauce.

6. Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil and pop it in the oven for 30 minutes. You're looking for the sauce to be bubbling away and the cheese to be starting to melt.

7. Take the foil off and sprinkle some extra mozzarella and Parmesan on top. Bake it uncovered for another 10 minutes. Wow, the smell is wonderful at this point! You want the top to be a beautiful golden brown and bubbly.

8. I know it's tempting to dive in, but let the shells rest for about 5 minutes. It just gives the filling a chance to set so they don't fall apart when you serve them.

Nutrition per serving

410 kcal	18 g	34 g	22 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- Fresh basil makes such a difference for a brighter flavor, but if you only have dried, just add it at the very end.
- If you're feeling fancy, you can swap half the ricotta for Greek yogurt or a touch of cream for a richer texture.
- Certified gluten-free pasta shells work perfectly if you need this to be gluten-free.