

Manicotti

INGREDIENTS

Manicotti

- 1 8 oz. pkg Manicotti Shells (14 shells)

Meat Mixture

- ½ pound lean ground beef
- ½ pound mild Italian sausage casings removed
- OR
- ½ pound diced chicken
- ½ pound smoked chicken sausage

- ½ medium yellow onion chopped
- 2 garlic cloves minced
- ¼ tsp EACH salt, pepper

Marinara

- 1 recipe [Homemade Marinara Sauce](#) or 3 ¾ cups store bought (warmed)

Cheese Filling

- 2 eggs
- 2 ¼ cups whole milk ricotta cheese
- ¾ cup sour cream full fat is best
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or ½ tablespoon dried
- 2 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley or ½ tablespoon dried
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 ½ cups freshly grated mozzarella
- ⅓ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ tsp EACH salt, pepper

Topping

- 1 ½ cups freshly grated mozzarella
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place manicotti shells into the bottom of a long pan. Pour hot tap water over the noodles until they are submerged. Let them soak for 30 minutes (you can chop your veggies, make marinara and filling during this time).
2. In a Dutch oven or large pot, brown ground beef, sausage and ½ onion, over medium heat. Season with salt and pepper then add garlic and cook 30 more seconds. Drain all but 1 tablespoon grease. Transfer to a paper towel lined plate to cool.
3. Prepare Marinara according to recipe directions using grease from pan instead of olive oil in recipe.
4. While sauce is simmering, preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Add eggs to a large bowl and whisk. Add all remaining Cheese Filling ingredients including cooled meat. Stir until evenly combined.
5. Lightly spray a 9x13 baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Spread 1 cup of Marinara sauce on the bottom of the prepared pan (layer will be thin).
6. Pat manicotti shells dry with paper towels and generously fill each shell with the cheese-meat mixture. To do this, I add the mixture to a freezer size bag, snip the corner and pipe the filling into each end. The ends should be overflowing.
7. Arrange the stuffed manicotti in a single layer in the baking pan (squeeze them in). I like to spread any leftover cheese filling on top. Evenly top with remaining sauce followed by 1 ½ cups mozzarella and ½ cup Parmesan. Tightly cover manicotti with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Uncover and bake and an additional 10 minutes or until heated through and Parmesan is golden.
8. Let the manicotti stand 10 minutes before serving.