



Baked Shells Casserole

Servings: 0 servings

Ingredients

- 5 tablespoons EVOO – Extra Virgin Olive Oil, divided
 - 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped, divided
 - 1 large or 2 small to medium onions, finely chopped, divided
 - 1 small carrot, finely chopped or grated
 - Salt and pepper
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons oregano or marjoram, half a palmful
 - 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, 1/3 palmful
 - 1 teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed by pressing under flat of your knife
 - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme, 5 to 6 sprigs
 - 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
 - 1/2 cup dry white or red wine
 - 2 cups chicken stock
 - 2 28-ounce cans Italian crushed tomatoes
 - 1 pound medium or large shell pasta (not extra-large stuffing shells)
 - 2 boxes frozen chopped spinach, defrosted and wrung dry in clean towel
 - Freshly grated nutmeg, about 1/4 teaspoon
 - 2 cups fresh ricotta cheese
 - 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, plus some to pass at table
 - 2 large egg yolks, lightly beaten
- Yields: Serves 4-6

Directions

In a large pot, heat 3 tablespoons EVOO, 3 turns of the pan, over medium heat. Add 4 cloves of chopped garlic, 3/4 of finely chopped onion and the carrot. Season with salt, pepper, oregano or marjoram, red pepper flakes, fennel seeds and thyme, and gently sauté 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Add in parsley, stir, then add wine and reduce a minute. Add stock and tomatoes, bring sauce up to a bubble and reduce heat to simmer. Simmer sauce 45 minutes.

After sauce has been simmering for 30 minutes, preheat oven to 375°F.

Bring a pot of water to a boil for the pasta. Salt water and cook pasta 5 minutes.

While pasta water comes to a boil, heat remaining 2 tablespoons EVOO in a small skillet over medium heat. Add remaining garlic and onion and sauté to soften, 5 minutes. Add spinach, pulling it apart and separating it as you add it to pan. Stir to combine well and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Turn off heat.

Drain undercooked pasta and return it to the hot pot. Add spinach mixture to pot along with ricotta and grated Parm. Stir to combine, adjust salt and pepper then add eggs and stir.

Pour a thin layer of marinara sauce into the bottom of a casserole dish. Fill dish with pasta then top with another thin layer of red sauce. Save remaining sauce to pass at table. Bake 30 minutes until bubbly.

Serve casserole directly from casserole dish, passing extra sauce and cheese at the table.