

BOURSIN-STUFFED SHELLS IN CREAMED SPINACH SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

For the creamed spinach sauce

2 pounds fresh spinach or 2 packages frozen spinach, chopped
4 tablespoons salted butter
1 teaspoon chicken or vegetable bouillon concentrate (or one cube)
4 tablespoons flour
1 1/2 cups milk
salt and pepper to taste
pinch of nutmeg
splash of heavy cream

for the filling

1 cup ricotta cheese
1 package Boursin spread cheese
2 eggs yolks
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon corn starch
salt and pepper to taste

for the shells and assembly

1 package manicotti (you will likely only need 10-12)
1 1/2 cup fontina, shredded

DIRECTIONS

Wash and soak fresh spinach thoroughly and drain. Blanch spinach in boiling water for about 2 minutes; drain and rinse in cold water. Squeeze spinach to remove moisture and chop well. If using frozen spinach, thaw directed, then drain well. Put in blender and puree until very smooth. You may have to add a little water if you removed too much water, but better to have to add more than have it too liquidy.

Heat a medium dutch oven or soup pot over medium heat, then melt butter until lightly browned and add the bouillon concentrate and stir together. Add flour, stir until smooth. Slowly add milk, stirring until mixture thickens. Be careful that your roux does not become lumpy so stir well.

Combine spinach with the bechamel sauce and taste to re-season. Add salt and pepper to taste. Simmer briefly and remove from heat. Add the pinch of nutmeg and splash of heavy cream. Set aside as you make the rest.

While you are making your spinach sauce, you can boil your shells Cook noodles until al dente, per the package directions. Drain and make sure they aren't stuck together. In a large bowl, combine egg yolks, ricotta, Boursin, corn starch and Parmesan cheese. Lay shells on paper towels to wick off extra water and fill each with the ricotta-Boursin filling. I did this using a zip top bag with the corner cut off, like a pastry bag.

Preheat oven to 375F.

To assemble, spread 2 cups of spinach sauce in your casserole dish. Place in filled shells, seam side down. Cover with additional spinach sauce and cover completely with the fontina. Spray a piece of aluminum foil with baking spray and cover the shells, sprayed side down. Bake for 35 minutes. Uncover; bake 15 minutes longer or until the top is bubbly and golden brown. Let stand for a minimum of 10 minutes before cutting and serving (it is screaming hot and if you cut it too soon, it's going to burn your mouth!)