

As cooking is my passion, it also sparks my interest in food magazines. I miss *Gourmet*, but there are still some other good ones around, one of them being *Food & Wine*. I always find something that interests me in this magazine. The January issue had one recipe that caught my attention and I knew I had to try it. The recipe was kale and artichoke stuffed pasta shells. The author, Anne Taylor Pittman, wrote a wonderful introduction describing her love for spinach-artichoke dip when she was a high school student. With that in mind, she created this dish.

I have made it twice and everyone has enjoyed it. It is creamy, with an earthy flavor and a spicy sauce, absolutely delicious. There is an interesting twist in this recipe. Instead of making a rich cheese sauce, cannelloni beans are puréed with Boursin cheese, which gives it a different flavor than usual. However, it's all good, because it comes together beautifully.

I changed the recipe a bit and used Swiss chard instead of kale, because I still have some in my garden. Feel free to use spinach or kale. I think all of these greens will work just fine. Another reason why I like this recipe is because it hides vegetables in the stuffing and that's a good way to feed them to my husband. I made some changes the second time by increasing the number of pasta shells from 16 to 20. Figure about 3 shells per serving, 4-5 if you don't serve a protein with it. The first time I used 1 tsp of Sriracha instead Calabrian Chile sauce. If you don't like heat, you can omit the hot sauce. Do not omit the crushed fennel seed, as it adds extra flavor to the sauce and it is good for your digestion.

I served these stuffed pasta shells with either a duck breast, sage & prosciutto chicken saltimbocca, or a steak. It's a perfectly fine as a vegetarian dish by itself. I microwaved the leftover shells the next day, and they were delicious.

Ingredients:

A 13 x 9-inch baking dish

16-20 uncooked jumbo shells (about 7 ounces)
2 cups or more of marinara sauce
1 tsp Calabrian Chile sauce or Sriracha sauce
1 tsp fennel seeds
cooking spray
¼ cup olive oil
4 cloves garlic
About 5-6 cups Swiss chard, kale, or spinach
1 (12-oz) marinated artichoke hearts
1 can (15.5 -oz) cannelloni beans
1 (5.2-oz.) Boursin cheese
4 oz. shredded provolone or Swiss cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

The Pasta

Heat a large kettle of water to boil, season with 3 TBS of salt. Pasta water has to taste like ocean water. Add the shells to the boiling water and cook for about 9 minutes, stirring occasionally. You don't want the shells fully cooked because you will bake them once they are

stuffed. Drain the shells and rinse them with cold water. Spread the shells on a paper towel to prevent them from sticking together. Then cool them.

The Sauce

Spray the baking dish with oil. Coarsely grind the fennel seeds with a mortar and pestle. Mix the marinara sauce with the fennel and hot sauce. Season with salt and pepper. Spread the sauce in the baking dish. I added more sauce than the original recipe called for.

Filling and finishing the dish

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Chop the garlic very fine. Wash the chard, removing the stems, and chop it coarsely.

Heat 2 tsp olive oil in a large frying pan with a lid. Add the garlic and sauté it for 30 seconds. Add the chard and stir, adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water. Cover and cook for a few minutes until the chard is tender. Add the coarsely chopped artichoke hearts and heat uncovered for a couple of minutes. Remove from heat and cool the mixture.

Rinse and drain the beans, mix them with the Boursin cheese and 2 TBS of olive oil in a food processor and process until smooth. Stir the bean and vegetable mixture together until combined. Season with salt and pepper.

Carefully spoon the bean and cheese mixture into the shells and arrange them in the baking dish with the tomato sauce. Sprinkle the cheese over the shells and bake uncovered in a preheated oven for about 20 minutes. The cheese needs to melt and sauce should be bubbling. Increase the heat to a high broil, and broil until cheese begins to brown.

Guten Appetit!

Here is a link to the original recipe

Recipe by Ann Taylor Pittman in *Food & Wine*

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