

Mangia Bene E Vivi Bene!

By FRANK ZEOLI



Manicotti

Growing up, every holiday dinner would include either lasagna, ravioli, or manicotti. They were always made fresh and with only the best ingredients. The combination of cheeses with the soft dough and tomato sauce would melt in your mouth.

Manicotti or “Mani-Gawl” as we would call them, made an appearance on our dinner table throughout the year, however, it was always the first course of any holiday meal, especially on New Year’s Day.



Prep Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 20 Manicotti's

Ingredients

- 1½ lb. of lasagna sheets (about 5,4”x18” sheets) *These can be bought frozen or made fresh. My grandmother would get them frozen at an Italian import store.*
- 1 lb. ricotta cheese
- ½ lb. of cooked spinach (chopped)
- 5 eggs
- ½ teaspoon of granulated garlic
- 1 tablespoon of parsley (dried)
- 1 cup of parmesan cheese (grated)
- ½ lb. of mozzarella cheese (shredded or fresh mozzarella can be cut it small cubes)
- 4 cups of marinara sauce
- Salt & pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a bowl, whisk together 3 eggs and the granulated garlic. Set aside.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk 2 eggs for use as an egg wash. Set aside.
4. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ricotta cheese, half of the parmesan cheese, cooked spinach, egg mixture, mozzarella cheese, salt, pepper and parsley. Mix it together thoroughly.
5. Make sure the lasagna sheets are completely thawed. One at a time, place the lasagna sheets horizontally on a cutting board and cut them in four pieces. Do this by cutting it down the middle and again from left to right. This will leave you with four squares of dough. Repeat until all five sheets have been divided. You will have 20 squares when you are done.
6. Take each square and apply an egg wash to the entire square. Add a teaspoon of the mixture to the middle of the square and fold the dough ends together from each side and seal them. Repeat until all of the squares have been stuffed.
7. In a baking dish, add some marinara sauce and spread it around covering the entire bottom. Place the manicotti in a row in the baking dish. Once the dish is filled, add more sauce to cover the manicotti entirely. Sprinkle the remainder of the parmesan cheese on top of the manicotti.
8. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes. Once cooked, take them out of the oven and let them sit for about 5 minutes which will enable the cheese to set.



Serve them with some good Italian bread.

