

Salt and Serenity

Sausage and Kale Stuffed Shells

Serves 4-6

I used a meat alternative sausage ([Beyond Meat Spicy Italian Sausage](#)) for this recipe to keep it vegetarian.

170 grams jumbo shells (½ of a 340-gram box), about 22 jumbo shells
2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
400 grams Hot or Mild Italian sausage (meat or plant based), removed from casing
2 shallots or 1 small onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, finely minced or grated on microplane
200 grams (small bunch) Dinosaur (also called Lacinato) kale, stems and ribs removed and leaves finely julienned (you will end up with about 4 cups loosely packed, after slicing into thin ribbons)
454 grams (2 cups) ricotta
1 large egg, lightly whisked
320 grams low moisture mozzarella (not fresh mozzarella), shredded (about 3½ cups), divided
50 grams Pecorino Romano or Parmesan cheese, grated (½ cup loosely packed), divided
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 660 ml jar Marinara Sauce (I love [Rao's](#)) (about 2¾ cups)

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Once it is boiling add 3 tablespoons Diamond Crystal kosher salt. Add jumbo shells and cook for 1 minute less than cooking instructions on the box. Drain shells and spread out on a lightly oiled baking sheet, so that they don't stick together.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 Tablespoon of olive oil and sausage and cook, breaking up meat with a potato masher or wooden spoon until the sausage is cooked. This will take about 5 minutes. Transfer sausage to a large mixing bowl.
3. Add 1 Tablespoon olive oil, chopped shallots and garlic to pan. Turn heat to low and sauté until softened, about 3-4 minutes. If the shallots start to burn add a few tablespoons of water to the pan. Add julienned kale and 2 Tablespoons water to pan and cook, stirring, until kale is wilted. Transfer kale and shallots to mixing bowl with sausage. Let cool for a few minutes.
4. Once kale and sausage mixture are no longer hot, preheat oven to 375°F. Add ricotta, egg, 2 cups grated mozzarella, ¼ cup pecorino or Parmesan, salt, and pepper. Stir well.
5. Stuff the shells with a little spoon or transfer the filling into a disposable piping bag and stuff them. You will get about 2 Tablespoons of filling into each shell.
6. Line the bottom of a 9x13 inch casserole dish (or 12-inch round dish) with 1½ cups of the marinara sauce. Arrange shells in a single layer. Spoon the remaining 1¼ cups of sauce over the shells. Scatter remaining 1½ cups of mozzarella and ¼ cup of pecorino or Parmesan over the top of the shells.
7. Cover casserole dish with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for an additional 10 minutes, until cheese is golden brown, and sauce is bubbling.

Make ahead and freeze instructions: Prepare casserole up to the end of Step 6. Cover top of casserole dish with foil. Wrap the entire casserole dish in plastic wrap and freeze. To bake,

remove plastic wrap and bake, without thawing for 45 minutes. Remove foil and continue for another 10 minutes until cheese is golden brown, and sauce is bubbling.