

CANNELLONI FLORENTINE

Makes 8-10 cannelloni

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from several sources.

Here's the thing with Spinach: Most people don't like cooked spinach, but you can easily incorporate it in foods that people will love to eat. Here is an excellent way to sneak spinach into the meals your kids eat.

Ingredients:

For the pasta (should you choose to make your own)¹:

2 large eggs

½ cup (70g) all-purpose flour

½ cup (82g) pasta flour (durum wheat semolina)
(or 1 cup (140g) all-purpose flour)

¼ teaspoon salt

Extra flour for dusting

¹ Or purchase dry manicotti tubes

For the filling:

8 ounces (227g) raw spinach; thoroughly washed

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon butter

1 small onion (or ½ medium); finely chopped

1 to 2 cloves garlic; minced or crushed

6 ounces (170g) prosciutto; finely chopped

10 ounces (283g) ricotta cheese

3 ounces (85g) freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

1 egg

⅛ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg

⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the sauce (if you want to make your own)²:

2 tablespoons olive oil

¼ onion; finely chopped

2 cloves fresh garlic; minced or crushed

1 28-ounce (794g) can Roma style tomatoes

4 basil leaves

1 tablespoon chopped parsley

² Or 1 32-ounce jar marinara sauce

Directions:

If you choose to make your own pasta, combine the eggs, flour, and salt in a bowl and mix until stiff enough to knead. Turn contents out onto the counter and knead until smooth, dusting with flour as needed to reduce stickiness. Wrap with plastic and set aside for at least one hour. If storing longer, store in the refrigerator.

If you choose to make your own sauce, prepare it in advance by heating the oil in a skillet. Add the onion and sauté over medium heat until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook an additional minute. Add the remaining sauce ingredients and simmer over low heat for 15 minutes, partially covered, stirring often. Set aside.

For the filling: Put about ¼ cup (60ml) water in a large skillet and heat to boiling. Add the fresh spinach

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and cover. Reduce heat to low and cook until wilted, about 3 minutes. Drain the spinach in a colander and allow to cool. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out excess moisture and then chop.

Place the olive oil and butter in the skillet. Sauté the chopped onions until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook an additional minute. Remove from the heat to cool and then place in a large bowl with the chopped prosciutto, spinach, cheeses, egg, nutmeg, and pepper. Combine.

Roll the pasta dough through a pasta machine to form sheets about 6 inches (15cm) wide. Cut into 4-inch (10cm) sections. Heat about 6 cups (1.4l) of water in a large skillet until boiling. Boil the pasta sheets about a minute (two at a time if the skillet is large enough) and then use a slotted spoon or strainer to move the cooked pasta to a bowl of cold water. The pasta should be under-cooked, as it will cook further in the oven. Continue until all sheets are cooked. (Or cook the dry cannelloni shells according to package directions.)

Place a pasta sheet on a flat surface. Put some filling on each sheet and spread across the width of the sheet. Roll up, overlapping the ends. (Or fill cooked cannelloni tubes.) (To determine how much to put on each sheet: If you have 8 sheets of pasta, divide your filling into 8 parts. 10 sheets, 10 parts. Etc.)

Coat the bottom of a 9x12-inch (23x30cm) baking dish with a little marinara sauce. Arrange cannelloni in the dish, seam side down. Spoon additional sauce on top, reserving some sauce for garnish. Cover with foil and bake in a 400°F (205°C) oven 25 to 30 minutes.

Serve hot, garnished with additional sauce.

The step-by-step photos were removed. See the video for the preparation.