

# Stuffed Shells of Our Collective Dreams!

*From Hot Dish with Sohla*

*serves 4 | active time: 1 ½ hours | total time: 2 hours*

## INGREDIENTS

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10 garlic cloves	1 large bunch parsley
7 tablespoons olive oil, divided, plus more	1 large bunch dill
4 links hot Italian sausage (12 ounces)	½ teaspoon chili flakes
One 24-ounce jar tomato passata/puree	1 cup whole milk ricotta
1 sprig fresh basil	1 cup (2 ounces) finely grated parmesan
kosher salt	finely grated zest of 1 lemon
24 jumbo shells (8 ounces)	1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 large bunch spinach (see note)	1 cup panko breadcrumbs
1 large bunch swiss chard	6 ounces fresh mozzarella
1 large bunch mustard greens	6 ounces provolone

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1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, prep all your garlic: Peel 2 garlic cloves and set aside for the breadcrumbs. Smash, peel, and chop the remaining 8 cloves (½ will be for the sauce and ½ for the greens).
3. **Make the sauce:** Heat a medium saucepan with 2 tablespoons oil over medium heat. Squeeze the sausage out of its casing into the pan and press into one layer and cook, undisturbed, until deeply browned underneath, 4 to 6 minutes. Add half the chopped garlic, break the sausage into crumbles using a sturdy whisk or wooden spoon, and cook 1 minute. Add the tomato and basil. Bring to a simmer, then reduce to the lowest setting. Cook, stirring occasionally, while you prep everything else.
4. **Cook the pasta:** Once the water is boiling, season generously with salt and add the shells. Cook, stirring occasionally, until flexible but still very raw at the core, 6 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer to a sheet tray, drizzle lightly with oil, and toss to coat.
5. Use 1 cup of pasta water to rinse out the tomato passata jar and add to the sauce. Reserve an additional 2 cups pasta water; set aside. Empty the pot (you'll be using it to cook the greens).
6. **Make the filling:** While the sauce continues simmering, prep your greens:
  - a. Spinach: Trim root ends and tough stems (if there are any), wash, roughly chop
  - b. Swiss chard & mustard greens: Strip leaves off of the stems, wash, roughly chop
  - c. Parsley & dill: Wash, reserve a big handful (of each) of tender leaves and stems for the topping, then finely chop the stems and roughly chop leaves

7. In the large pot over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons oil, remaining chopped garlic, and chili flakes. Cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Add all the greens (spinach, chard, mustard, dill, and parsley) and toss to coat in oil. Add a splash of reserved pasta water and cook, stirring occasionally, until the greens are wilted and the water has simmered away, 3 to 5 minutes. (If the pot becomes dry before all the greens have wilted, add another splash of pasta water.) Transfer greens to a large bowl.
8. To the greens, add ricotta, parmesan, lemon zest, pepper, and big pinch of salt. Stir well to combine, taste, and season with more salt as needed.
9. **Assemble:** Seat a rack in the lower part of the oven and another in the center; heat to 375F.
10. Add enough of the reserved pasta water to the sauce until it's the consistency of thick tomato soup. Taste and add salt if needed (you may not need any because the pasta water is salted). Spread half the sauce on the bottom of a 3 quart baking dish or 12-inch skillet.
11. Generously stuff the shells with the greens and arrange on top of the sauce, then spoon over remaining sauce. (Some shells will tear, that's okay. You just need at least 20.) Cover with a lid or tightly wrap with foil and bake 30 minutes on the center rack.
12. **Meanwhile, make the topping:** Add the remaining 3 tablespoons oil to a medium bowl. Finely grate the remaining peeled garlic cloves into the oil and stir to combine. Add the breadcrumbs, a big pinch of salt, and stir until well combined. Spread onto a small baking sheet and bake on the lower rack until golden brown, tossing once during baking, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, finely chop the remaining herbs. Once the crumbs are golden, transfer to a small bowl, add the herbs and toss to combine. Taste and add salt as needed.
13. **Finish:** Remove pan of shells from oven and heat the broiler to high. Uncover the dish. Tear the mozzarella into small pieces and dot all over the shells, then top evenly with provolone. Broil until bubbly and browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Rest for 5 minutes, sprinkle over the herby crumbs, and serve.

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## Notes

**GREENS:** For the filling, I use a mix of greens (spinach, swiss chard, and mustard) because together, they offer a more nuanced flavor and texture than spinach alone. However, you can use a combination of any other quick-cooking greens, such as watercress, beet greens, or baby kale. You need a total of 1 ½ pounds of greens, once the tough stalks have been removed. Be sure to avoid kale, collards, and cabbage

which won't cook down in enough time. Wanna keep things simple? Use 1 ½ pounds of frozen spinach instead.

**VEGETARIAN:** Simply omit the sausage and increase the olive oil in the sauce to ¼ cup.

**DOUBLE THE RECIPE:**

- Cook the sauce in a large pot
- Wilt the greens in batches
- Assemble in a 9 by 13-inch casserole dish

**PREP IN STAGES:**

- Cook the sauce up to 1 week in advance: Simmer for 45 minutes until thickened and the flavors have melded. Reheat and thin with pasta water just before assembling.
- Cook the greens up to 1 day in advance, using hot tap water to steam the greens instead of pasta water.
- Make the topping in advance: Toast the crumbs in garlic oil up to 3 days in advance. Add the fresh herbs and final seasoning just before using.