

Three Pepper Manicotti

This is by far one of the most requested dishes from my catering days. The sweetness that the baby spinach and bell peppers bring is balanced nicely by the saltiness of the reggiano and romano, and the freshness of the ricotta and homemade tomato sauce. It finishes subtly with a hint of nutmeg. You've run the daily nutritional gauntlet and it couldn't have been more pleasant. It is filling yet light. This is definitely a contender for best date plate.

3 small bell peppers (1 red, 1 yellow, 1 orange)
2 packages fresh baby spinach
1 lb. of ricotta
1 medium onion
2 cloves of garlic
1 egg
1/2 cup parmesan reggiano
1/2 cup romano cheese
salt
pepper
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 liter of homemade tomatoe sauce
10 manicotti shells
2 tblsp. cooking oil

Steam spinach, let cool. Squeeze excess moisture from spinach. Chop finely. Sauteé onions and garlic in oil, let cool. In large bowl, beat egg and fold in with spinach, onions and ricotta. Add 1/4 cup parmesan, 1/4 cup romaon cheese, nutmeg, salt and pepper, fold into mixture. Boil pasta halfway (7 min.) and let cool. Fill pastry bag with mixture and pipe into manicotti shells. Coat baking dish with 1/2 liter tomato sauce. Place manicotti into baking dish, careful not to have them touching each other. Pour more of the tomato sauce over the manicotti so they won't dry out. Sprinkle remaining 1/4 cup parmesan and 1/4 cup romano over top. Cover baking pan with aluminum foil and bake for 45 min. at 350 C . Take foil off baking dish for last 10 min. of cooking.