

How to Cook a Prepared Manicotti or Stuffed Shells

Preparation Before Cooking

1. If Refrigerated: Remove the dish from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before baking to help it come to room temperature. This helps it cook evenly.
2. If Frozen: Either thaw it overnight in the refrigerator or add extra baking time if baking directly from frozen.
3. Preheat Oven: Set your oven to 350°F (175°C).

Baking Instructions

1. Cover the Dish: Most manicotti casseroles should be baked covered with aluminum foil for the first part of baking to prevent the cheese from browning too quickly and to retain moisture.
2. Bake:
3. Refrigerated Manicotti: Bake covered for 30-40 minutes, then uncover and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes until the cheese is melted and slightly golden, and the sauce is bubbling.
4. Frozen Manicotti: Bake covered for 50-60 minutes, then uncover and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes. Check that the center is hot and the pasta is tender.
5. Check for Doneness: The casserole is done when the sauce is bubbling around the edges, the cheese is golden, and a knife inserted into the center comes out hot.

Serving Suggestions

- Let the casserole rest for 5-10 minutes after baking. This makes it easier to slice and serve.
- Garnish with freshly chopped basil or parsley, if desired.
- Serve with a side salad and garlic bread for a complete meal.

Tips for Best Results

- If the casserole seems dry, you can add a little extra sauce before baking.
- For added flavor, sprinkle extra Parmesan or mozzarella cheese on top before the final uncovered bake.
- Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

