

Donald's Beef Manicotti

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 1 lb carrots -- cleaned and trimmed, but not peeled
- 1 lb onions -- cleaned
- 22 manicotti shells (have extra on hand, depending on how well the shells are filled)
- Olive oil
- Tomato sauce; one (1) to two (2) 650mL jars (one is adequate for light coverage)
- Mozzarella cheese
- Salt to taste, and for the water to boil the manicotti

Equipment:

- Food processor or blender
- Large skillet or electric frypan
- Kitchen knife
- Cutting board
- Cheese slicer / knife to slice the cheese (and possibly another to remove the slices from the first knife)
- Spatula / flipper
- Stove
- Pot in which to boil the manicotti shells
- Strainer and plate or bowl to catch the drippings
- Slotted spoon to retrieve the manicotti from the boiling water
- Spoon to transfer spaghetti sauce to the manicotti
- Multiple oven-proof dishes, sufficient to hold the filled manicotti shells; I normally use dishes able to handle two and four manicotti shells each.

Making and cooking the manicotti filling:

- 1) Clean and trim the carrots.
- 2) Grind the carrots finely in the food processor.
- 3) Place the ground carrots in the skillet / frypan.
- 4) Clean and trim the onions.
- 5) Grind the onions finely in the food processor.
- 6) Place the ground onions in the skillet / frypan.
- 7) Place ground beef in the skillet / frypan.
- 8) Fry the onions, carrots, and beef together, constantly mixing the ingredients.
- 9) The meat, carrot and onion mixture is cooked when the water fraction has evaporated (grease will remain), and caramelization begins on the skillet surface (ie. sticking and browning).

How to make the manicotti:

(*). Only begin this step when the meat, onion, and carrot mix is fully cooked.

- 10) Add salt and oil to water, enough to cover manicotti shells.
- 11) Bring water to a boil.
- 12) Place up to six (6) manicotti shells in the boiling water, and boil for five (5) minutes.
- 13) Remove the manicotti with a slotted spoon and place in the strainer which is on the plate to catch the dripping water and oil, which can eventually be recycled in the boiling water pot.
- 14) Individually fill the shells with the meat mix by spooning the mix into the shell which is being held in your other hand.
 - This can be a very HOT process, be careful, and possibly allow the manicotti shells to cool down somewhat.
- 15) Place the filled manicotti shells in ovenproof baking dishes.
- 16) Repeat 12) to 14) until all shells are filled.
- 17) Cover filled shells with tomato sauce of your choice.
- 18) Slice cheese from the block of cheese about 1-2 mm thick, or shred the cheese, and cover the manicotti shells.

Serving fresh:

19a) Optionally reheat the manicotti in the microwave, if your dish fits.

20a) Bake immediately at 300F-350F until the cheese begins to brown, about 10-15 minutes if preheated, or up to 30-40 minutes if not.

Freezing:

19b) Place in bags, seal, and freeze.

20b) To cook, fully defrost, and bake as per 19a) and 19b)