

## ITALIAN CHEESE FILLING

This is a terrific cheese filling for any kind of stuffed pasta. Of course I feel that way because it is my own unique recipe that took many years to perfect. This works for ravioli, cannelloni, manicotti, stuffed shells and so on. It is an interesting combination of strong and subtle, and I find it is best to serve with my marinara sauce because it will probably overpower a more delicate white sauce.

3 Cups shredded Mozzarella Cheese  
4 oz. Chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry  
1/2 cup shredded Parmesan or Asiago Cheese (you can use the grated stuff from the plastic shaker if you must, but the real thing has an amazing flavor)  
15 oz . Small curd Cottage Cheese, drained  
1 teaspoon Garlic Salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground Black Pepper  
3 Mild Italian Sausages, skinned and browned, and in small crumbles

NOTE: The sausage adds a very nice texture and some tasty spices, but if you want a vegetarian filling, the recipe works just fine without it.

Put the cottage cheese in a strainer, and allow it to drain for a few minutes to get rid of some of the moisture. Ricotta cheese may be used instead, but I prefer the creaminess of the cottage cheese.

Place all ingredients in your mixer and mix until well blended. You'll know it's done when it tries to start making a ball.

Start stuffing!

As I already mentioned, this recipe was designed originally for ravioli. Like the pasta recipe, this will take care of about 60 individual ravioli's. Use your hands to make balls about the diameter of a nickel, and the proportions will work out pretty well. (It may be a good idea to place a nickel on the counter for reference) If you're a little short of filling at the end...well, who's counting anyway? If you have extra and you probably will, put the remaining cheese mixture in your marinara sauce shortly before serving, and stir well to melt, and avoid burning it. It makes a wonderful looking and very smooth sauce, and this trick will work just as well with any other stuffed pasta too!