

Spinach and Ricotta Stuffed Tomatoes

8 ripe red tomatoes, the best you can find
Salt, for draining the tomatoes
3 tablespoons best-quality olive oil
1 cup finely chopped yellow onions
10 ounces frozen spinach, defrosted, drained, and squeezed dry
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
grated nutmeg, to taste
1 cup ricotta cheese
2 egg yolks
½ cup toasted pine nuts
¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, plus extra to top the tomatoes
½ cup chopped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley

Wash and dry the tomatoes and cut off their tops. With the handle end of a small spoon, scrape out the seeds and partitions, being careful not to pierce the sides of the tomatoes. Salt the cavities and set the tomatoes upside down on a paper towel to drain for 30 minutes.

1. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-low heat, add the onions, and cook, covered, until tender and lightly colored, about 25 minutes.
2. Chop the spinach and add it to the skillet. Combine the onions and spinach thoroughly, season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg, and cover. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Do not let the mixture scorch.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
4. Beat the ricotta and egg yolks together thoroughly in a mixing bowl. Add the spinach mixture, pine nuts, ¼ cup of the Parmigiano-Reggiano and the parsley, and season with salt and pepper.
5. Gently blot the tomato cavities dry with a paper towel and spoon an equal share of the spinach mixture into each one. Top each tomato with a sprinkle of additional cheese.
6. Arrange the tomatoes in a shallow baking dish and set in the upper third of the oven. Bake until the tops are well browned and the filling is hot and bubbly, about 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

The Silver Palate Cookbook