

## Taco-Stuffed Pasta Shells

20 jumbo pasta shells (20 will fill a 9x13 baking dish)  
1 lb. lean ground beef  
1 can (16 oz.) refried beans (or 2 cups [homemade](#) beans)  
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese, *divided*  
2 tbsp. chili powder  
1½ cups (12 oz. bottle) taco sauce or salsa, *divided*  
¼ cup sliced green onions  
Light sour cream (optional)

1. Prepare pasta shells according to package directions, then drain. (I always prepare a few extra in case some break while being filled.) After cooking, either toss with a little oil (to prevent sticking), or set out on a baking sheet, separated, while they wait to be filled.

2. Cook beef in large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until no longer pink. Drain. Add beans, ¾ cup cheese and chili powder; mix well.

3. Spread ¼ cup taco sauce over bottom of each of two 8-inch square baking dishes (or ½ cup sauce in a 9x13 pan). Fill pasta shells with beef mixture (about 3 tbsp. each, which equals one large cookie scoop). Place 8-10 shells in each baking dish, filled side up. Spoon remaining taco sauce over shells. Cover one baking dish with plastic wrap, then wrap with foil. Label and freeze for up to 2 months.

4. Cover remaining baking dish with foil. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Serve with green onions and sour cream.

*To bake frozen shells:* Place baking dish in the refrigerator overnight. Preheat oven to 375°. Remove foil & plastic wrap; recover with foil. Bake for 45-50 minutes or until heated through. Top the same way as above.

*Tip for cooking the shells:* To make it easier to test when the shells are done, I throw in a few of the broken shells that are inevitably in the box. After cooking for the recommended time, I fish out one of these pieces and test it.