



Petite Greek "Pastitsio" Pasta Bites with Creamy Dreamy Béchamel Sauce

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** 15 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

bake: to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

boil: to cook a food in liquid heated to the point of gas bubbles and steam forming (boiling point is 212 F at sea level).

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

stir: to mix together two or more ingredients with a spoon or spatula, usually in a circle pattern, or figure eight, or in whatever direction you like!

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Paper cupcake liners
- Small saucepan
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Colander or strainer

Ingredients

Petite Greek "Pastitsio" Pasta Bites with Creamy Dreamy Béchamel Sauce

- 2 C rigatoni pasta **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free rigatoni or similar tube-style pasta)****
- 2 C water
- 1 big pinch salt
- 1 C frozen peas
- 2 garlic cloves
- Béchamel Sauce:
 - 1 C heavy cream **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1 C unsweetened coconut cream)****
 - 1 tsp all-purpose flour **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 1 tsp cornstarch)****
 - 1 tsp onion powder
 - 1 pinch salt
 - 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
 - 1 T butter **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance)****

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free rigatoni or similar style pasta. For 1 tsp all-purpose flour in sauce, substitute 1 tsp cornstarch.

Dairy: For 1 C heavy cream, substitute 1 C unsweetened coconut cream. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance.

Instructions

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intro

Pastitsio (pah-STEET-see-yoh) is a Greek dish with roots dating back to 330 ACE in the Roman Empire. It is a tasty pasta dish that reminds me of lasagna but with a slightly different personality. Pastitsio typically combines long tube noodles, creamy béchamel sauce, and ground beef or lamb. Our Sticky Fingers Cooking version will focus on making a bite-sized pastitsio with peas instead of meat that is extra creamy from classic béchamel sauce.

measure + boil

Measure **2 cups of water** and **1 big pinch of salt**, pour them into a small saucepan, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, turn the heat off and carefully pour the hot water into a large bowl. Add **2 cups of dry rigatoni** to the water and stir. Let the pasta sit for at least 5 minutes while you prepare the sauce.

superstar food spotlight

Frozen peas have many great qualities that make them perfect for many dishes. To freeze peas, manufacturers steam freshly harvested peas and slide them into a huge flash freezer. Flash freezing is a quick freezing process used to preserve the texture, color, and flavor of foods. The best part about peas is that while they have a delicate, sweet flavor, they are also packed with nutrients. Peas contain carbohydrates, protein, fiber, vitamin A, and vitamin K, to name a few. They are also absorbent, so they become full of flavors and sauces when cooked properly.

chop + fold

Roughly chop **2 garlic cloves** and measure **1 cup of frozen peas**. You will be gently folding them into the Creamy Dreamy Béchamel Sauce.

intro

Béchamel sauce is one of the five mother sauces. That means béchamel sauce is the original creamy sauce from which all other cream-based sauces derive. If you have eaten Alfredo sauce, pasta carbonara, mornay sauce, or even a cheese sauce, you have had a derivative of béchamel sauce. Think of them as a family of sauces with one trait in common: cream!

scrumptious science

Time to make a "roux" (pronounced "roo")! What is a roux? Roux, or chef's paste, is a cooked combination of butter and flour in equal parts. This mixture is then used to thicken stocks and cream into various sauces and soups. For this recipe, we will make a simple roux, which is made by combining your butter and flour over a low heat until all the flour and butter are fully combined into a blonde paste. From there, stock, cream, or water can be added to create soups and sauces with vegetables or meat incorporated into the mix.

measure + simmer

In a small saucepan, measure **1 tablespoon butter**, **1 pinch of salt**, **1/2 teaspoon black pepper**, **1 teaspoon onion powder**, and **1 teaspoon flour**. Stir the ingredients over low heat until a paste forms. This is a simple roux. Slowly pour in **1 cup of heavy cream** and continue to stir and simmer.

stir + simmer

Stir and simmer until the sauce thickens enough to coat the back of your spoon. This consistency is a French term: "nappe" (nap-pay).

drain + arrange

Drain the pasta. Place **12 cupcake liners** in the wells of a muffin pan. Then, arrange the pasta so that each noodle is standing upright and tightly packed together. Each cupcake liner should be full with approximately 10 noodles each.

scoop + bake

Scoop the sauce over the rigatoni and bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until the pastitsio is slightly browned on top. Remove from the muffin pan and cool for a few minutes before digging in. "Kalí órexi" (kah-LEE OAR-ex-ee) or "Enjoy your meal" in Greek! This sauce can be used for many different pasta dishes. Have fun mixing and matching new types of pasta with different variations of béchamel to explore as many mother sauce derivatives as you can.

Featured Ingredient: Heavy Cream!

Hi! I'm Heavy Cream!

"I'm not a lightweight, like half and half. I'm full of fat and pour out much thicker. You can also call me 'heavy whipping cream.' The names refer to the same thing! Did you know that I can transform myself with your help? I turn into a fluffy topping to put on cakes and pies when you whisk me as fast as you can (or you can use a mixer). However, I go through an even bigger change when you shake me really hard in a covered container for a few minutes—I turn into butter!"

Heavy cream is the thick, high-fat liquid at the top of raw milk. It naturally separates from the milk, rising to the top. It is skimmed off and then pasteurized to kill bacteria, which makes it safer to drink and lasts longer.

Heavy whipping cream is made up of about 36 percent fat. In comparison, regular whipping cream is 30 percent fat, and half-and-half averages to about 14 percent.

Heavy cream whips up better as a topping if the cream is cold, and pouring it into a cold mixing bowl before whipping also helps.

The Guinness World Record for the most people simultaneously whipping cream by hand is 1,434 and was set on August 22, 2015, by employees of the Swiss company Nordostmilch AG in Bürglen, Switzerland.

A dollop of whipped cream is great on fruit, cakes, and pies. The tallest recorded dollop so far was over 7 inches atop a mug of hot chocolate!

Some of the foods heavy cream is added to include cakes, frostings, ice cream, salad dressings, sauces, soups, sour cream, scrambled eggs, chocolate ganache, crème fraîche, panna cotta, and homemade cheeses.

One-half cup of heavy cream contains 43 grams of fat, 3 grams of protein, and the minerals calcium and phosphorus. It has more of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K than lower-fat dairy products. Fat-soluble vitamins are more easily absorbed by your body when eaten with fat.