

## Pastitsio

<http://userealbutter.com/2013/12/09/pastitsio-recipe/>

from [Melt: The Art of Macaroni and Cheese](#) by [Stephanie Stiavetti](#) and [Garrett McCord](#)

### sauce

2 tbsps olive oil  
1 1/4 lbs. ground lamb  
1 small onion, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
14 oz. crushed tomatoes  
4 tbsps tomato paste  
1/2 cup dry white wine  
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/4 tsp ground allspice  
1 tsp fresh oregano, chopped  
1/4 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped  
1 large or 2 small bay leaves  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground

### pasta

2 egg whites  
12 oz. bucatini or penne  
1 tsp olive oil  
4 oz. grated Kefalotyri or Pecorino Romano  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground

### mornay sauce

2 egg yolks  
3 cups whole milk  
3 tbsps butter  
3 tbsps flour  
10 oz. grated Kefalotyri or Pecorino Romano  
1/4 tsp sea salt  
1/2 tsp black pepper

**Make the meat sauce:** Brown the lamb in a large saucepan or stockpot over high heat. Drain the fat and reserve the lamb in a bowl. Heat the olive oil in the same pan over medium heat and sauté the onions until soft. Add the garlic and sauté for a minute. Add the lamb, tomatoes, tomato paste, wine, cinnamon, allspice, oregano, rosemary, bay leave(s), salt, and pepper. Stir everything together. When the sauce comes to a boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer the sauce for 30 minutes. Stir occasionally until most of the liquid has simmered away. Remove the bay leaves.

**Prepare the pasta:** Whisk the egg whites to soft peaks (should just hold its shape, but will fall back on itself rather than stand upright like stiff peaks). Cook the pasta according to the package instructions, but only cook for 75% of the suggested cooking time (because it will cook some more in the oven). Drain the pasta. If you are using bucatini, cut the noodles so they are 8-inches long (or the length of your baking dish). Return the pasta to the pot. Add a teaspoon of olive oil and toss with the pasta, then let the pasta rest for a minute. Add the egg whites and 4 ounces of grated cheese. Toss well, season with salt and pepper.

**Make the mornay sauce:** You can make this sauce while the pasta is cooking. Beat the egg yolks in a medium bowl. Heat the milk in a small saucepan over medium heat. Turn off the heat when the milk just starts to boil at the edges. Place the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. When the butter has melted, add the flour and whisk or stir until the roux takes on a light brown color, making sure to scrape the bottom to avoid burning. This should take about 3 minutes. Slowly stir the milk into the roux and continue stirring until the sauce takes on a nappe consistency (should be able to drag a clear line across the back of a spoon). Remove the pan from heat. Temper the yolks by whisking 1/4 cup of the hot sauce into the beaten egg yolks, whisking quickly to avoid curdling the eggs. Whisk another 1/4 cup of the sauce into the egg yolks. Whisk the egg yolk mixture back into the saucepan until incorporated. Reserve 1/2 cup of the grated cheese and set aside. Stir the rest of the grated cheese into the sauce until melted. Season with salt and pepper.

**Assemble the pastitsio:** Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease the bottom and sides of a deep 8×8-inch baking dish (mine was 9×9-inch) with olive oil. Give the pasta a stir and pour half of it into the baking dish. Smooth the pasta out so that they are parallel and cover the surface area of the dish. Gently spread the meat sauce over the pasta to completely cover the noodles. Spread the rest of the pasta over the meat sauce, arranging the pasta like the first layer and covering the meat sauce layer. Pour the mornay sauce over the pasta, making sure to cover every surface. I did not use all of my mornay sauce because my dish was not deep enough to accommodate everything. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the sauce. Set the baking dish on foil-lined baking sheet to catch drips and overflows during baking. Bake for 30 minutes until the cheese on top is golden. Let cool for 30 minutes before serving or refrigerate overnight and reheat in a 225°F oven for 30-45 minutes or until bubbly. Serves 6.