



# Pasticcio

**SERVES 8**

The Italians made lasagna famous with their hearty dish layered with rich ragu and sheets of pasta. But the Greeks' ziti and spicy meat sauce tastes equally outrageous. It is a savory pie wrapped in pastry that originated in Italy but was adopted by the Greeks in the 1800's by a chef who created his own version using cinnamon and cloves in the meaty layers. Pasticcio literally means "messy", which accurately describes the process of stacking the soft noodles, splashy sauce and creamy béchamel. I reduce my splatter factor by following tradition and wrapping the mixture in a puff pastry for a shepherd's pie effect that outperforms any lasagna I've ever eaten.

---

## INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoons olive oil	¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1/4-pound bacon, diced	1-pound dried ziti pasta
1 1/2 cups onion, chopped	1 1/2 cups Parmesan cheese
1 1/2 pounds ground beef	1 cup Pecorino cheese
1/4 teaspoons red chile flakes	1 cup whole milk
1/2 cup Marsala wine	3/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1 cup chicken stock	fresh ground black pepper
2 cinnamon sticks	2 packages frozen puff pastry (need three sheets)
15 pitted prunes, chopped	3 tablespoons milk
2 tablespoons butter	

---

## PROCESS:

### Make the filling:

In a large, deep skillet, heat the oil and sauté the bacon over medium-high heat until crisp. With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to paper towels to drain. Add the onions to the skillet and sauté until soft. Add the beef and cook until browned, breaking up the bits. Add red chile flakes, salt, and



wine. Simmer for one minute and add chicken broth and cinnamon sticks. Cover pan and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and remove cinnamon sticks. Stir in prunes, butter, and ground cloves.

Meanwhile, cook the ziti pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until just slightly undercooked. Drain.

Transfer the ziti to a large bowl and stir in the meat mixture, cheeses, milk, nutmeg, and pepper to taste. Add salt, if necessary. If mixture is dry, add more stock or milk.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Butter a 9X13" baking pan.

Divide the puff pastry into three portions. Cover one piece with a towel and roll the other two portions together on a floured board to make one thicker portion. Line the dish with the doubled pastry, trimming to a one-inch overhang. Reserve trimmings. Add the filling and smooth it with a spatula. Roll the remaining puff pastry and stretch it to cover the filling. Fold the edges over the under pastry and pinch, forming a sealed edge around the pan. Press edges with a fork. Brush entire top pastry with milk and bake for 15 minutes. Sprinkle entire top of pastry with a little water and bake 10 minutes more. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 30 more minutes. If pastry puffs up too much, prick with a knife to release steam. Turn off oven and leave pie in for ten more minutes. Remove from oven and cool 15 minutes before serving.