

Pastitso

SERVES 8-10

MINCE SAUCE

¼ cup (60ml) olive oil
3 onions, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1kg beef mince
½ cup (125ml) red or white wine
550g jar Dolmio pasta sauce
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 cups (500ml) water
2 stock cubes (vegetable, chicken or beef)
Salt & pepper, to taste

BECHAMEL SAUCE

125g butter
½ cup (75g) plain flour
1 litre (4 cups) milk, warmed
2 eggs, lightly whisked
1 cup (80g) grated parmesan or romano cheese

500g packet bucatini spaghetti
3 cups (240g) grated parmesan or romano cheese
¼ cup (20g) grated parmesan or romano cheese, extra, for topping

- 1 **To make the mince sauce** Heat oil in a saucepan over moderate heat. Add onions and garlic; cook, stirring for 5-10 minutes or until lightly golden. Add mince, cook, stirring, over high heat, breaking up lumps for 5 minutes or until browned. Add wine, pasta sauce, tomato paste, water, crumbled stock cubes and salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until most of the liquid has evaporated and sauce has thickened.
- 2 **To make the béchamel sauce** Melt butter in a heavy-based saucepan over low heat. Do not burn. Add flour; cook, stirring for 1 minute. Gradually add warm milk, stirring constantly until smooth then continue stirring over moderate heat until sauce boils and thickens. Remove pan from heat. Cool for 5 minutes. Add eggs; mix well then add cheese.
- 3 **To assemble** Preheat oven to 170°C. Grease a 24cm x 32cm baking dish. Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling water for 10 minutes or until just tender. Drain; do not rinse. Combine pasta and 2 cups (160g) of the cheese in a bowl. Spread half the pasta mixture over base of prepared dish. Using a slotted spoon, spoon all of the mince sauce over pasta, reserving the liquid from mince. Sprinkle mince sauce with ½ cup (40g) of the remaining cheese. Top with remaining pasta mixture. Drizzle pasta with some of the reserved liquid from mince sauce. Sprinkle with ½ cup (40g) remaining cheese. Pour béchamel sauce on top. Sprinkle with extra grated cheese. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until golden brown.
- 4 Stand for 5-10 minutes before serving.

TIPS

- + You can use 2 x 400g cans tomato instead of pasta sauce.
- + You can use light or full cream milk in the béchamel sauce. Warm milk in the microwave on High (100%) for 3 minutes.
- + Uncooked pastitso can be prepared a day ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Cook the following day.
- + Pastitso can be frozen either uncooked or cooked. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight.