

Mediterranean Pashtida (Quiche)

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Pashtida is a Hebrew word derived from German (*pastete*) and Italian (*pastetta*). It has been used since the Middle Ages for any baked dish based on a batter of eggs and cheese, vegetables, meat, fish, or any combination thereof, with or without a crust. Cheese-based *pashtidas* like this one are a staple of Shavuot.

Ingredients (for two 24 cm/10 inch quiche pans)

The Pastry Shell (Crust):

350 g (12½ oz, 2½ cups) flour
1 level teaspoon salt
250 g (9 oz) chilled butter, cut into pieces
70 ml (2½ fl oz) cold water

1 cup fresh parsley or coriander, chopped
500 g (1 lb 2 oz) feta cheese, diced
20 cherry tomatoes, halved
70 g (2½ oz) shelled pumpkin seeds

Sauce Royale:

The Filling:

1 eggplant, diced
Olive oil for baking
1 onion, halved and sliced thinly
1 leek (white part only), sliced thinly
3 sweet red peppers

750 ml (1½ pint, 3 cups) whipping cream
4 eggs
Pinch of nutmeg
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed

1. Prepare the **pastry shell**: Mix the flour and salt in a food processor. Add chilled butter and pulse until the mixture forms crumbs. Add water and pulse only until a ball of smooth dough is formed. Cover with cling wrap and refrigerate for one hour.
2. Roll out a thin layer of dough on a well-floured surface and line the quiche pans. Chill for at least 30 minutes.
3. Prepare the **filling**: Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F)
4. Roast the peppers over an open flame until the skin is charred. Cool in a sealed plastic bag (to make peeling easier). Peel, remove seeds and membranes and cut into strips.
5. Pour some olive oil over the eggplant and bake for about 20 minutes, until the cubes are light brown and tender. Remove but don't turn the oven off.
6. Sauté the onions and leeks in olive oil until they turn translucent. Remove from the pan and cool.
7. Prepare the **Sauce Royale**: Combine all the ingredients into a smooth mixture.
8. **Assemble and bake**: Spread the onion-leek mixture on the pastry shell, lay on the eggplant cubes and pepper strips, sprinkle the parsley or coriander and carefully pour on the sauce. Arrange the cheese cubes and cherry tomatoes and sprinkle with the pumpkin seeds.
9. Bake for about 25 minutes until golden-brown. If the quiche browns too quickly, cover with aluminum foil and remove the foil 5 minutes before taking the quiche out of the oven.

