

# BÉCHAMEL and PROSCIUTTO PASTRIES

Makes about a dozen.

By Dennis W. Viau; an original recipe.

These are savory little pastries, baked in flaky phyllo dough and eaten warm. The filling is a simple béchamel sauce with diced prosciutto, peas, and cheese. These delicate pastries would be good as appetizers, a side dish, a light lunch, or as snacks.



## **Ingredients:**

### ***For the béchamel sauce:***

1 tablespoon butter (regular, unsalted, or clarified is okay)  
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
1 cup (240ml) milk  
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg (or from a spice bottle)  
⅛ teaspoon white pepper  
Salt to taste

### ***For the Filling:***

1 tablespoon butter  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
4 ounces (115g) peas, frozen or fresh  
3 ounces (85g) prosciutto (or ham); preferably in one piece to cube rather than thin slices  
½ cup (56g) freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese  
5 ounces (140g) mozzarella cheese; coarsely shredded or cut into small cubes  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

### ***For the Pastries:***

1 package (1 pound, 454g) phyllo dough pastry sheets; thawed  
½ cup melted butter (clarified butter, if you have it)  
Sesame seeds for garnish

## **Directions:**

To make the béchamel: Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat and add the flour. Cook 1 to 2 minutes, stirring often. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Add the nutmeg and white pepper. Stir in the milk. Return to the heat and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook 10 minutes, stirring constantly to avoid scorching. The sauce should thicken to a “coats a spoon” consistency. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a few minutes. Stir in the Parmesan (or Romano) and adjust for salt. To prevent a skin forming on the surface, carefully press plastic wrap onto the surface. Set aside to cool thoroughly.

To start the filling: Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the chopped onion and sauté over medium heat until tender and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the peas, cover, and cook over medium-low heat about 6 minutes, a few minutes longer if the peas are frozen. Meanwhile, dice the prosciutto (or ham) and mozzarella cheese to a size about equal to that of the peas. When the peas are cooked, remove from the heat and allow to cool. Add the prosciutto and mozzarella.

Combine the béchamel mixture and onion/peas mixture in a bowl. Taste for salt.

To assemble the pastries: Place a sheet of phyllo on a work surface and brush lightly with melted butter. Place a second sheet on top and brush with butter. Toward one end, place a heaping tablespoon of the filling in the center and shape into a triangle. Fold the end of the phyllo over the filling. Then fold in the two sides, brushing each with butter, so that the width of the sheet is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its original width. Then roll up the pastry, folding at an angle to maintain a triangular shape. Place on a buttered baking sheet.

For an alternative shape: Place a sheet of phyllo on a work surface and brush lightly with melted butter. Fold over about a third of the sheet from one end to make a square. Brush again with butter. Place a second sheet of phyllo on top, with the long end extending over the opposite end that was folded over. Brush with butter and then fold over the extra end, like above, to shape a square. Turn the square to be a diamond in front of you. Place some filling toward one corner and fold the corner over the filling. Start rolling the dough up, like an egg roll, folding in the side corners as you roll. Finish by brushing the final corner with melted butter and roll up the dough completely. Place on a buttered baking sheet with the final corner on the bottom of the roll.

Heat your oven to 425°F (220°C) with a rack in the upper third of the oven.

Brush the final pastries with melted butter and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake 10 to 15 minutes, until lightly browned, and the filling just starts to ooze from the pastry. Allow to cool 10 to 15 minutes before serving. They should be eaten warm, not hot.