

AUTHENTIC PITTA SALENTINA

Traditional Southern Italian Potato Pie with Tomato, Capers & Melted Cheese

Prep: 25 min | **Cook:** approx. 55 min (plus boiling) | **Servings:** 6

A rustic potato casserole from Salento, Puglia, with crisp golden edges and a soft, savory filling of tomato, capers, and melted cheese.

Ingredients - Potato Layers

- 6 medium potatoes (about 2 lb / 900 g)
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup (50 g) freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup (30 g) plain breadcrumbs, plus extra for topping
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Ingredients - Filling

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 can (14 oz / 400 g) peeled Italian tomatoes, crushed
- 2 tbsp capers, rinsed and drained
- 5-6 slices melting sandwich cheese (American-style cheese)
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2-3 oz (60-85 g) prosciutto crudo (optional)

For Assembly

- 2 tbsp breadcrumbs
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Olive oil for greasing the baking dish

Instructions

- 1. Boil the potatoes** Boil the potatoes in salted water for 20-30 minutes, until fork-tender. Drain, peel, and mash. Let cool until warm.
- 2. Cook the tomato filling** Saute the onion in 2 tbsp olive oil for about 5 minutes. Add red pepper flakes, tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Simmer 15-20 minutes until thickened; stir in capers near the end.
- 3. Make the potato mixture** Mix the warm mashed potatoes with eggs, Parmigiano Reggiano, 2 tbsp olive oil, 1/4 cup breadcrumbs, salt, and pepper.
- 4. Assemble** Heat oven to 350 F (180 C), conventional/static setting. Oil an 8 x 10 in (20 x 25 cm) baking dish and dust with breadcrumbs. Spread in half the potatoes. Top with the tomato-caper filling, cheese slices, and optional prosciutto. Cover

evenly with the remaining potatoes.

5. Finish the top Sprinkle with 2 tbsp breadcrumbs and drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil. Add shallow fork marks if desired.

6. Bake Bake on the middle rack for 35-40 minutes until golden brown. For a crispier top, broil for the final 2-3 minutes, watching carefully.

7. Rest and serve Let stand 15-20 minutes before slicing. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Nonna's Tips

- Choose starchy potatoes for a soft but sliceable texture.
- Thicken the sauce well to prevent soggy layers.
- Capers are delicious even without olives.
- Replace sandwich cheese with caciocavallo for a more traditional variation.
- Keep leftovers refrigerated for up to 3 days and reheat until piping hot.

Nutrition (Estimated per serving)

410 kcal | 40 g carbs | 15 g protein | 22 g fat | 8 g saturated fat | 5 g fiber | 6 g sugars | 720 mg sodium

Estimates exclude optional prosciutto; actual nutrition depends on the brands and amounts used.