

# Frito Pie

By Kia Damon

YIELD 6 to 8 servings

TIME 45 minutes (**Prep** 10 minutes | **Cook** 35 minutes)

Not quite nachos, and not quite pie, this comforting casserole is a cheesy and crunchy delight that is thought to have roots in both Texas and New Mexico. In its most classic (and some might say best) form, a small bag of Fritos corn chips is split down the middle, placed in a paper boat and piled high with chili, topped with cheese, diced onion, pickled jalapeños, sour cream and pico de gallo, then eaten with a plastic fork. (It is often called a “walking taco,” because it’s eaten on-the-go, at sporting events and fairs.) This version is adapted to feed a crowd: The Fritos, Cheddar and chili — made with ground beef, pinto beans, taco seasoning and enchilada sauce — are layered in a casserole dish, baked, then topped with a frenzy of fun toppings. For maximum crunch, save a cup of Fritos for topping as you eat.

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## INGREDIENTS

**1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil**

**1 pound ground beef, preferably 20-percent fat**

**1 medium yellow onion, diced**

**1 (1-ounce) packet taco seasoning (or 3 tablespoons of a [homemade taco seasoning](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1019760-taco-seasoning) (<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1019760-taco-seasoning>))**

**2 (15-ounce) cans pinto beans, drained and rinsed**

**1 (19-ounce) can red enchilada sauce (or 2½ cups of [homemade enchilada sauce](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024661-enchilada-sauce) (<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024661-enchilada-sauce>))**

## PREPARATION

### Step 1

Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

### Step 2

In a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed skillet, heat the oil over medium-high. Add the beef and onion, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the meat is browned and the onion is translucent, 8 to 10 minutes. Lower the heat if the meat is browning too quickly.

### Step 3

Sprinkle the taco seasoning over the meat mixture and pour in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water; mix well. Bring to a simmer and cook until the liquid thickens and coats the pan, scraping up any browned bits, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the beans and enchilada sauce, stirring until combined. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes.

### Step 4

Assemble the pie: Sprinkle half of the Fritos in the prepared baking dish, followed by half of the Cheddar. Cover with all of the meat filling. Finally, add the remaining Fritos (minus the reserved

~~[shredded cheese](#)~~

**2 (9-ounce) packages or 1 (18-ounce) package Fritos, 1 cup reserved for serving (8 to 10 cups)**

**8 ounces shredded Cheddar (about 2 cups)**

**Diced white onion, sliced scallions, pickled jalapeños, sour cream or [pico de gallo](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023522-pico-de-gallo) (<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023522-pico-de-gallo>), or a combination, for serving (optional)**

meat filling. Finally, add the remaining Fritos (minus the reserved cup) and Cheddar.

### **Step 5**

Bake until the cheese is melted and bubbly, 7 to 10 minutes. Rest for 5 minutes, then add the desired toppings to the casserole, or spoon into individual bowls and have eaters top as they please. Add reserved Fritos for more crunch, if desired.

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#### PRIVATE NOTES

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