

CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM PIE FILLING

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon oil
1 large carrot, finely diced
1 stalk celery, finely diced
2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 2-inch pieces.
1 litre chicken stock
1 ¼ cup dry cider, or apple juice or ginger beer or white wine.
2 teaspoons salt
400g mushrooms, cleaned and halved
3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
1/3 cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon good quality mustard
1 teaspoon fresh tarragon leaves, chopped (optional)

Equipment

9 inch pie dish

INSTRUCTIONS

In a saucepan, melt butter and oil. Add carrot and celery and cook until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the chicken thighs in a saucepan. Pour over the chicken stock and cider, then add 1 teaspoon of the table salt. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat and cook for 15 minutes. Add the mushrooms to the pan and cook for another 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and strain the stock through a colander into a second clean pan. Set aside the chicken, vegetable and mushrooms to cool slightly.

Place the pan of stock over a medium heat, skim any excess fat from the surface with a spoon as it comes back to a simmer, and cook until the stock has reduced by half, about 20 minutes.

In a large sized pot, put the butter and flour together in the pan and warm over a medium heat. When the butter starts to bubble, reduce the heat to low and cook for 6 minutes, stirring frequently.

Gradually add the reduced stock to the butter and flour, one ladle at a time, stirring well between each addition to stop any lumps from forming and allow the sauce to thicken. Continue until all the stock has been incorporated. Add the heavy cream and mustard to the sauce and bring it back to a simmer and then cook for a further 4 minutes.

Fold the chicken pieces, vegetables and mushrooms into the sauce and spread the pie filling mixture over a roasting tray to cool quickly. Once the pie filling has cooled to room

temperature, pop the tray into the refrigerator for 10 minutes to cool further. Remove the tray from the refrigerator and fold the chopped herbs into the pie filling.

INSTRUCTIONS ON ASSEMBLING THE PIE

See Hot Water Pastry crust for recipe.

On a lightly floured surface, cut the rested and chilled pastry dough in half. Roll out first half of the pastry into a large circle, and place it into the pie dish, leaving an inch overhang. Trim off any excess so it is even all around the pie dish. Chill in the refrigerator until needed.

Using the shape of the pie dish as a guide, cut out another circle for the top, reserving any trimmings for decoration. Place in fridge until needed.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Remove the pastry-lined pie dish from the refrigerator. Spoon the chilled pie filling into the pastry case and level the surface. Lay the remaining pastry circle over the top of the filling and lightly brush with the egg wash. Crimp together the lid and sides of the pastry case so the pie is sealed all the way round. Lightly brush again with the egg wash, this time brushing the crimped edges too. Return the pie to the refrigerator and chill for another 30 minutes.

Remove the pie from the refrigerator and cut a half inch hole in the middle of the pie lid to allow steam to escape. Lightly brush the pastry all over with egg wash and then return to the refrigerator to chill for another 30 minutes. When ready to bake, remove the pie from the refrigerator and brush again with the egg wash.

Place pie on a rack in the centre of the preheated oven and bake the pie for 45 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown. Halfway through the cooking time, turn the pie around in the oven to ensure an even bake.