

Catherine Fulvio, Ballyknocken Cookery School Recipes

Beef & Stout Pies with Potato Pastry Topping



For the filling

100g smoked bacon, sliced into lardons

1kg round steak stewing beef, diced

Plain flour, seasoned with salt & pepper

1 large onion, thinly sliced

1 red pepper, diced

400g tinned diced tomatoes

1½ tbsp tomato puree

2 tsp sugar

¾ tsp English Mustard powder

500ml stout

A bouquet garni (4 to 5 parsley sprigs, 1 fresh thyme sprig and 1 bay leaf, tied together)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

200g chestnut mushrooms or any of your favourite, cleaned and sliced

1 tbsp butter

Rapeseed oil

For the pastry

170g plain flour

½ tsp salt

115g chilled butter, diced

150g steamed potatoes, pressed through a ricer

¾ tsp baking powder

Cold water (about 3 tbsp), to bind

Flour, for dusting

Egg wash

Heat a casserole dish with oil over a medium heat and sauté the bacon until crispy, transfer to a clean plate and set aside. Toss the diced beef into the seasoned flour and dust the excess flour off. Add a little more oil to the casserole and fry the beef in batches until browned on all sides. Place the seared beef pieces on the clean plate with the bacon and set aside.

Add a little more oil to the casserole and gently sauté the onion until just softened but not brown. Deglaze the pan with some stout. Return the beef and the bacon and its juices to the casserole and stir in the red pepper, tomatoes, tomato puree, sugar, mustard and bouquet garni to the saucepan and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Add the rest of the stout and bring to the boil, cover, reduce the heat and simmer over a low heat for about 1½ hours or until the meat is tender and the sauce thick. Stir from time to time.

During the last 10 minutes of the cooking time, heat a medium frying pan with a little butter and add the mushrooms with some salt and pepper and sauté for about 4 to 5 minutes. When the casserole is cooked, add the mushrooms and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Check the seasoning, adding salt & pepper if required.

During the cooking time, prepare the pastry. Firstly, sieve the flour and salt into a large bowl. Add the diced butter and rub with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the baking powder and mix well. Stir in the mashed potatoes and pour in just enough cold water to form soft pastry dough. Turn the dough out on a floured surface and knead very lightly.

When you are ready to make the pies, remove the bouquet garni from the beef.

Choose 6 ramekins. Preheat the oven to 210°C/fan 190°C/gas 7. Carefully roll out on a floured surface, the pastry shouldn't be too thin and roll out the pastry. Using a large cutter, cut out 6 or more discs that are 2cm larger than the ramekins. Spoon the beef into the bowls, brush the edges with egg wash and place the pastry discs on top. Crimp the edges. Make a small hole in the

top for the steam to escape.

Leave in the fridge to “rest” for about 20 minutes.

Brush with egg wash and transfer in the oven for about 18 to 20 minutes or until golden and baked.

Leave to “rest” for about 5 minutes before serving with a fresh garden green salad.

Curried Mussel Soup



This is an elegant dinner-party-style soup – it's quite filling, though, so it's good to opt for a lighter main course to follow. We have an abundance of wonderful mussels here in Ireland, so we should use them more in home cooking. They take flavour very well and are particularly tasty with curry spices.

For the broth

- 1kg / 35oz fresh mussels
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 medium red chilli, deseeded and finely diced
- ½ fennel bulb, finely sliced
- 100ml / 3 fl oz dry white wine
- 400ml / 13½ fl oz vegetable stock

For the Soup

- 3 tbsp butter
- 4 tbsp flour
- 1 tsp Madras curry powder
- 400ml / 13½ fl oz vegetable stock

- 4 tbsp sherry
- 200ml / 6 fl oz double cream

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the topping

- 1 medium carrot, peeled and finely diced
- ½ fennel bulb, finely diced
- ½ celery stick, finely diced
- 2 tsp chopped parsley
- 4 tbsp sour cream, to garnish

To make the broth, first clean the mussels by scrubbing or scraping the shells under cold running water to remove seaweed, barnacles and mud. Pull away any 'beards' hanging from the mussels. Then drain them and discard any that are cracked or have opened. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over a medium to high heat. Add the onion, garlic and chilli and sauté for 4 to 5 minutes. Add the fennel and simmer for a further 2 minutes. Pour in the white wine and bring to the boil. Stir in the vegetable stock and bring to the boil again before adding the mussels.

Cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, shaking the saucepan occasionally, until the mussels are open. Strain the mussels, keeping the broth. Scoop the mussels out of their shells and place in a bowl. Discard any that remain closed. To make the soup, put the butter, flour and curry powder into a large saucepan over a medium heat and stir well before adding the vegetable stock and the mussel broth. Keep stirring until it thickens slightly. Add the sherry and cream and stir well. Return the mussels to the saucepan and heat through.

Check the seasoning, adding salt and a little freshly ground black pepper to taste.

To prepare the topping, combine all the ingredients.

To serve, ladle the soup into warm bowls.

Top with the finely chopped vegetables and garnish with a little sour cream.