



Chicken & Vegetable Pies

There's something very comforting about a homemade pie. This one, which I've been making for over 30 years, is one of my favourites. If you're short on time you can use a barbecued chicken and frozen vegetables ... but if you have the time, make it from scratch with a free-range chicken like the ones from Eugowra Game Birds (poultry supplier to top restaurants also doing home delivery). You'll taste the difference and end up with a couple of litres of chicken stock to pop in the freezer for later. This style of pie, called a pot pie, is super easy as there's no pastry base to fiddle about blind-baking before you add the filling. If you prefer an enclosed pie with a crisp pastry base and top, check out the Breville pie maker, which we sometimes use for lunch at work ... with one of these and a packet of frozen pastry on hand (such as the wonderful all-butter puff from Carême) you can whip up quick, delicious pies from whatever you have in the fridge or pantry, including leftovers.

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5kg chicken
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 75g butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 leek, white and pale green part, washed well and finely sliced
- 2 cobs corn, kernels removed
- 2 carrots (about 300g), peeled and finely chopped
- 180g shelled green peas (about 500g peas in the pod)
- 2 tablespoons plain flour
- ½ teaspoon mustard powder
- ⅓ cup milk
- ⅓ cup cream
- 1 bunch chives, chopped
- 7 sprigs thyme, leaves only
- 2 sheets butter puff pastry
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Green salad, for serving

METHOD

1. Place chicken in a large saucepan, cover with cold water, add a tablespoon of salt and bring to the boil. Skim to remove any froth that has floated to the surface. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes, skimming occasionally. Remove from heat and set aside, covered, for 20 minutes.
2. Remove chicken from cooking liquid and set aside to cool. Reserve ¾ cup of the liquid and freeze the rest to use as stock for another dish.
3. Meanwhile, melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat. Add onion, leek, corn, carrot and a good sprinkle of salt and cook, covered, for 10 minutes or so, stirring occasionally, until carrot is tender.
4. Stir in peas then add flour, mustard and pepper and stir for 2 minutes. Add milk, cream and reserved stock, increase heat to high and stir until mixture comes to the boil, then stir for another minute. Set aside.
5. Preheat oven to 180°C.
6. When chicken is cool enough to handle, remove meat from carcass and shred or cut into bite-sized chunks. Stir chicken, chives and thyme through the vegetable mixture.
7. Divide mixture between 6 ramekins, cut discs from the pastry sheets large enough to cover the ramekins with a little overhang.
8. Top ramekins with pastry, using a fork to press the edges down to seal, brush with egg, make a slash in the top and bake for 15-20 minutes, until golden.
9. Serve with a green salad.