



Pastetli

In Switzerland, pastete means pie and in Swiss adding an “i” to the end of a word forms a diminutive – so a small pie is a pastetli. Pastetli in Switzerland are what we know by the French name vol au vent, and they’re a very popular starter or light meal with a salad, usually filled with a mushroom cream sauce that may contain all sorts of meat including veal sausage or sweetbreads. Traditionally pastetli are a special dish, served on Christmas Eve and other special occasions like christenings. My recipe is based on one from the Basel Country Women’s Cookbook.

Serves 4 as a starter or 2 as a main



INGREDIENTS

- 4 vol-au-vent cases
- 2 pork and fennel sausage (about 180-200g meat)
- 400ml chicken or beef stock
- 1/3 cup white wine
- 40g butter
- 1 tablespoon plain flour
- 2 tablespoons cream
- Salt flakes and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- 200g button mushrooms, halved and finely sliced
- Salad, for serving (optional)

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 170°C.
2. Place vol au vent cases on a baking tray and set aside.
3. Remove sausage meat from its casing and use damp hands to roll into small meatballs, a bit larger than a pea (you’ll get about 28).
4. Bring the combined stock and wine to the boil in a small saucepan, add meatballs, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Then scoop meatballs out of the stock with a slotted spoon and set aside.
5. Increase heat under the stock and boil until reduced to about 1 cup.
6. Meanwhile, melt half the butter in a small frying pan over medium heat, add mushrooms and a good pinch of salt and cook, covered, for 5–8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened. Set aside.
7. Melt remaining butter in another saucepan over low heat, stir in flour and cook for 2 minutes.
8. Add reduced stock to the flour, increase heat to medium–high and stir until it comes to the boil and thickens.
9. Stir in meatballs, mushroom (and any cooking liquid) and cream.
10. Taste and add salt and pepper. Remove from heat, cover and set aside to keep warm.
11. Place vol au vent cases in the oven for 6–8 minutes, until heated through.
12. Return sauce to the boil.
13. Spoon into vol au vent cases and serve hot with a salad garnish if you like.