

Chicken Pot Pie

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 2 hours | Total Time: 2 hours

Chef's Notes

Pot pies are a great make-ahead meal. They can be assembled a day or two in advance and kept in the refrigerator. Just be sure to cool the mixture completely before topping with the puff pastry. Egg wash the top of the dough just prior to baking. The cooking time will be slightly longer, as all of the ingredients will be cold. If you find that the puff pastry is getting too brown before the inside is cooked through, rest a piece of foil over top of the pastry and bake until the inside reaches at least 165° degrees Fahrenheit (74° Celsius). The foil will slow the browning process down.

Making the Broth

To make the broth, rinse the chicken and place into a large pot. Cover with cold water and bring to a simmer over medium heat, while you prepare the vegetables (mirepoix).

Roughly chop the celery, onions, carrots and the white and light green parts of the leek.

Skim the broth before adding the mirepoix and salt. Bring everything back to a gentle simmer and let cook for about 30 to 45 minutes, skimming the surface as needed. Just be sure to not let the broth come to a boil.

Meanwhile, prepare the rest of your mise en place for the pot pies.

Step 1: Making the Broth

- 1 whole chicken
- 2 stalks celery
- 1 medium onion
- 1 leek
- 2 small carrots
- 1 tbsp sea salt

Preparing Your Mise en Place

For the pot pie mise en place, cut the onion, carrots, and leeks into large dice. Slice the mushrooms and set everything aside.

In a small fry pan over medium heat, toast the cumin and fennel seeds just until fragrant. Roughly pound them in a spice grinder or mortar and pestle. Set aside and check the broth.

Step 2: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 1 cup onion
- 1/2 cup carrots
- 1 cup leeks
- 1/2 cup cremini mushrooms
- 1/2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/4 tsp fennel seeds

Checking the Broth

Once the broth has cooked for about 30-45 minutes, check the water level, adding more cold water to cover, if needed. Then add the bouquet garni, which consists of the thyme, parsley, bay leaf and peppercorns. If the chicken floats out of the broth, gently turn it over. Let simmer for another 20 to 30 minutes while you start to cook the vegetables.

Step 3: Checking the Broth

- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 small bunch of parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp black peppercorns

Cooking the Vegetables

To cook the vegetables, first melt the butter in a large fry pan over medium-low heat. Sweat the mushrooms, onions, leeks and carrots. Add the salt and let sweat until soft and translucent, about 5 to 10 minutes. The carrots should still be a little al dente. Once ready, add the toasted spices and the flour. Stir until all of the flour has been incorporated. Turn off the heat and let sit while you check the broth again.

Step 4: Cooking the Vegetables

- 5 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 5 tbsp all-purpose flour

Finishing the Broth

Once the broth has simmered for about an hour or so, remove the chicken and place it onto a plate. Let cool slightly while you strain the broth. When the chicken is cool enough to handle, remove the meat and take off the skin. Roughly dice about 2 cups worth of breast meat and set aside. The leftover chicken can be used in another recipe.

Step 5: Finishing the Broth

- 2 cups chicken breast (from broth)

Finishing the Sauce

To finish the sauce for the pot pies, turn the heat back up to medium and slowly stir in the hot broth. Add the broth until the sauce is of a medium consistency; not too thick and not too runny. Add the diced chicken and thyme. Fold in the frozen peas and check for seasoning, finishing with a squeeze of fresh lemon or a touch of white wine, if desired.

Place four ramekins onto a tray and divide the mixture evenly between them. Transfer to the refrigerator to cool, while you roll out the puff pastry.

Step 6: Finishing the Sauce

- 2 to 2 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 2 or 3 small sprigs fresh thyme
- 1/2 cup frozen peas
- 2 tsp white wine (or lemon juice)

Assembling the Pot Pies

To finish the pot pies, whisk the egg to make an egg wash.

Flour the counter and roll out the puff pastry to about 1/8" –inch, checking to make sure you have at least 1 1/2" -inches of overhang. Using either a paring knife or a large ring, cut out the dough, then brush off the excess flour. Puff pastry works best when it is really cold, so each time you cut out a round, place it onto the tray and back into the refrigerator.

To finish assembling, make sure the filling is cool before brushing the top of each ramekin with the egg wash. Drape a piece of dough overtop and squeeze the dough slightly upwards; making sure it is nice and tight around the ramekin. Refrigerate for at least 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 425° degrees Fahrenheit. Just before you bake the pot pies, brush the dough with the egg wash. Vent the tops to let the steam escape. Bake for about 20 to 25 minutes or until the puff pastry is a dark golden brown (and the internal temperature reaches at least 165° degrees Fahrenheit / 74° Celsius). Once done, let the pot pies sit for a few minutes before serving.

Step 7: Assembling the Pot Pies

- 1 large egg
- all-purpose flour (for dusting)
- 1 lb puff pastry (approx.)