

WONDERFUL LIFE FARM'S CHICKEN POT PIE

This is our family's favorite chicken pot pie. We serve it for family meals and to guests for a comforting meal in the autumn and on cold, winter nights. It is based (but with my own adaptations) on a recipe from Colonial Williamsburg. It is time-intensive to make, and I usually spread the work out over two days (you will find that noted), but it is worth the extra effort.



THE PASTRY:

2 c. flour

1 t. salt

2/3 c. salted butter

1/3 c. ice water

In bowl of a food processor, combine flour and salt by pulsing 6-8 times. Cut butter into 1/4" cubes and add to food processor bowl. Pulse 20 times, until mixture resembles coarse meal. With food processor running, slowly add the water and continue processing until the dough comes together and cleans the side of the food processor bowl.

Remove from food processor and knead in hands to create a ball. Flatten ball into a disc shape and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 30 mins. before rolling out on a floured surface. Or soften dough for at least 30 mins. prior to using.

THE CHICKEN AND CHICKEN STOCK:

1—5-6 lb. chicken, rinsed and cleaned

2 celery ribs, chopped

1 medium onion, sliced

1 bay leaf

1 t. kosher salt

1/2 t. white pepper

FOR THE FILLING:

1/2 c. salted butter

1/2 c. flour

4 celery ribs, sliced

4 carrots, sliced

3-4 medium russet potatoes, diced

salt

freshly cracked pepper

FOR ASSEMBLING:

1 egg

2 T. milk

1 recipe of pie pastry

On Day #1:

In a stockpot, place rinsed chicken. Add celery, onion, bay leaf, salt, and pepper. Pour in enough water to cover chickens. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, until chicken is very tender...about 2 hours. Remove chicken and cool. Strain the vegetables off, reserving all the liquid (as your chicken stock) in another large pot. Allow the stock to cool and then refrigerate overnight.

When chicken is cool, remove all meat from the bones. (I like to leave the meat in large chunks, because I've found that people are so pleased to find big chunks of meat in their pot pie.) Refrigerate overnight.

On Day #2:

Remove stock from the refrigerator and skim all the solidified fat off the top. Set on counter to warm a bit.

Remove chicken from refrigerator and allow to come to room temp.

In a large pot, over medium-high heat, melt butter. Add the flour, whisking until well-blended, about 3 minutes. Stirring constantly, pour in enough chicken stock (1 cup at a time) to achieve desired consistency (will need about 4 c.). Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened and smooth (about 5 mins.)

Using a large pot with a steamer insert, bring water to boil in bottom of pot. Add all chopped vegetables and cover; steam until fork tender, but not too soft. Remove from steamer basket and place in a large bowl; cool slightly.

Add chicken to bowl with cooked vegetables. Add sauce. Season with salt and freshly cracked pepper. Stir gently to bind ingredients.

Butter a 9 x 13 dish (or a lasagna pan), or eight, 2-cup dishes and set aside. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Pour filling into pan (or divide between dishes). Roll out softened pastry dough on a lightly floured surface to 1/8" thick. Cut pastry to fit dish(es). Place atop filling and flute edges of crust. Cut slits or a hole in pastry to allow steam to escape. In a small bowl, beat together egg and milk. Brush mixture lightly onto top of pastry. Bake until crust is golden brown and filling is piping hot throughout, approximately 35-40 minutes for individual dishes, or at least an hour for a large pan. Serve hot.