
Chicken and Ham Pie

One to four portions

Ingredients

1 pack of puff pastry (all butter)
1 roast chicken
100g ham (in a piece)
1 tbs flour
30g butter
500 ml milk
1 bay leaf
1 tbs tarragon or thyme
small bunch parsley
an extra tablespoon milk (glaze)

Equipment

small saucepan (or 2)
pie dish or small casserole

Method

Strip the chicken and separate all the meat from the rest - carcass, skin and fat, which you can use to make a stock. Chop into small bite sized pieces, 1-2 cm size, with the ham, and mix.

Make a white sauce by first heating the milk with the bay leaf and thyme or tarragon. In a separate pan, melt the butter and stir in the flour. Keep over a low to medium heat for about one minute, then gradually add the milk, a small amount at a time and mixing well to make sure it is smooth. This is much easier if the milk is hot. You want a consistency like cream or custard (the pourable variety, not the thick varieties). Season the sauce to taste; it should be slightly more seasoned than you expect, but this depends on the chicken and ham, which could be well seasoned anyway.

Add the chopped parsley to the white sauce, then mix with the meat. Put the mixture into one or more pie dishes, casseroles, or even large mugs; make sure that they are well filled, as the pastry will have to rest on the top of the mixture, and a part filled dish makes for a saggy lid.

The pastry must be all butter, as you don't want the trans-fats (or nasty taste) of non-butter pastry. Or you can make your own shortcrust pastry.

Roll out the pastry to cover your pie dishes; about the thickness of a pound coin is right. You can brush beaten egg on the edges of the dish to help the pastry to stick. Glaze with either a little milk or beaten egg (for colour). Pinch the edges of the pastry to make sure it is attached to the dish and look decorative at the same time. Make a slit in the middle of the pastry - about 3cm long is fine, and push it a little open.

Back in a medium oven for 25 minutes, until the pastry is golden and well puffed.

Variations

Could try using a small pot of creme fraiche instead of the white sauce. It's OK to use shortcrust pastry.
