

Megan's Demon-Pleasing Meat Pies

From PERSONAL DEMONS

Ingredients

- 2-3 lbs stew beef or sirloin, cut in chunks
- 12 oz dark beer (Guinness or Murphy's)
- 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- 2-3 tbsp flour
- 1 tbsp or so onion powder
- salt & pepper to taste
- 2 tsp or so each of parsley, thyme (or whatever herbs you like)
- 1 tsp or so of rosemary or to taste
- 1/8 tsp or so nutmeg or to taste
- 2-3 tbsp Worcestershire
- 2 tsp or so gravy powder (optional)
- 1-2 pkgs frozen puff pastry (Check to see how much pastry is in a package. A block of pastry will usually give you enough for a top and bottom crust, whereas a roll-out sheet may only be enough for one.)

Heat olive oil in a large frying pan or saucepan with a lid. Cook chopped onions (if using) until they start to brown. (If you're not using onions, add the onion powder just before the beef or at the same time). Add beef, in batches if necessary, and brown. (Pan should be very hot, so the beef sears well). Sprinkle with herbs while cooking. Salt lightly, but do not pepper. (This tends to be a little salty, so go easy on the salt until you've tasted later). The beef will be hard at this point, like tough little nuggets.

When beef is all browned, add it all back to the pan and sprinkle with flour. Stir well. Add Worcestershire and bouillon, stir well. Add pepper and beer and stir well, scraping at the bottom of the pan, until it comes back to a low boil and the foam from the beer is mostly gone. Let it boil a couple of minutes, then cover and simmer 2

When done—the meat should be very tender—taste and adjust seasonings. Check the liquid amount. It shouldn't be soupy (if it is, dump some of the excess, but save it in case you need to add it back in.) Make a Beurre blanc with some of the cooking liquid and some flour, then stir that back in to thicken it (or just add a little flour at a time and stir it in well). Set aside to cool once it's reached the consistency you like. It should resemble a slightly thin gravy. (It will thicken a bit as it bakes, so don't worry if it still seems too liquidy.)

While the filling cools, roll out the pastry and shape it for the pan. Line a pie pan (Megan uses a 9-inch deep dish pie pan, but you can even make square pies) with pastry, bake at 400 degrees (or according to package directions) for 15-20 minutes or until puffy and starting to brown. Add filling, cover with second pastry sheet, crimp edges. Be sure to cut a vent in the "lid" so steam can escape.

Bake a further 30-40 minutes until top crust is puffy and brown. Serve with gravy and whatever side dishes you like. This reheats beautifully, too, in the microwave or the oven (350 degrees for 20 minutes or so, and cover the pastry with foil so it doesn't get too brown).