



Chicken, Leek and Mushroom Pie

(inspired by a recipe in Jamie Oliver's *Jamie's Dinners*)

A note on pastry: you could, of course, use purchased puff or shortcrust pastry. Many of the recipes I read, including the one that inspired this pie, used pre-prepared frozen pastry. But truly, pastry making is *so* easy! Once the filling was simmering under Big Boy's watchful gaze, I was able to throw the dough together in a matter of minutes. I don't even bother using the food processor anymore, because I find making pastry by hand so therapeutic.

Pâte Brisée

- 170g cold unsalted butter
- 320g plain (all-purpose) flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2+ tablespoons iced water

1. In a large, wide mixing bowl, place the flour and salt. Rub the butter in until the flour turns a light yellow colour and attains a crumbly texture. Most of the butter should be incorporated by this stage.

2. Add the cold water one tablespoon at a time, mixing with your hands until it forms a smooth textured ball. The amount of water you need might vary each time you make this, depending on factors such as the ambient temperature and humidity. Wrap the finished dough in cling film and allow it to rest in the fridge while you prepare the filling.

Filling

- olive oil
- 50g unsalted butter
- 700g free range chicken thigh fillets, cut into pieces
- 1 medium leek, green and white parts, washed and sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- handful of fresh thyme, leaves picked
- 2 tablespoons plain flour
- 150g gourmet mushrooms, chopped (I used oyster and chestnut)
- 200ml white wine
- 125ml milk
- 125ml water
- 80ml cream
- 1 egg

1. Preheat oven to 200C with fan.
2. In a large saucepan (I used a non-stick wok), heat a generous swirl of olive oil and the butter. Add the chicken, leek, carrot, garlic and thyme and cook slowly over a medium to medium-low heat for about 15 minutes.
3. Turn the heat up and add the flour. Stir for a couple of minutes, then add the wine, water and milk. Add the mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper - do this slowly. Add a little salt at a time, then stir and cook for a minute or so before tasting. If necessary, add more - doing it in this manner will ensure that you don't accidentally over-season the dish.
4. Add the cream and turn the heat down to medium-low. Simmer for a further 10 minutes or so, until the sauce is quite thick, but still loose.

Assembling the pie

1. Pour the filling into a large pie dish and allow to cool slightly.
2. On a large sheet of parchment, roll the pastry into a circle large enough to fit over the top of the pie plate. There will probably be more pastry than you need - depending on the size of your pie dish - any leftovers can be well-wrapped and frozen for a future dish. Egg wash the edge of the dish and drape the pastry over. Trim the edges of the pastry and push down with your fingers to seal the pie.
3. Egg wash the top of the pastry and scratch a light cross hatch over the top of the pie. Make a small incision in the middle of the pastry to allow the steam to escape.
4. Bake the pie for 25 - 30 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and little bits of bubbling filling are oozing through the cracks. You might want to check it after 20 minutes to see how it's travelling. Once the pie is ready, let it rest for a few minutes out of the oven before cracking the top open with a large metal spoon.

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