

Chicken, Leek and Bacon Pie



This is a very adaptable recipe and can be made with left over roast chicken or fresh chicken. You can substitute different vegetables, it works well with mushrooms instead of leeks and you can vary the amount of ingredients to suit your family size.

Ingredients

Chicken pieces



Leeks



Bacon



Whole milk



Flour



Butter



Salt and Pepper



Fresh herbs



Cooking oil



Ready rolled puff pastry



one egg, beaten



Method

- ▶ Start by preparing the leeks. Four leeks is about right for a family of four. Cut off the roots on the white part and cut off the top part of the green leaves.



- ▶ Then slice the leeks in half lengthways.



- ▶ Rinse the leeks under cold running water to wash out any grit.
- ▶ Slice the leeks into 3cm pieces.



Method Continued

- ▶ Cook the leeks in a little water, on a low heat ,until they have softened. 10 minutes should be enough time but cook for a little longer if they are still firm. Put to one side until later.
- ▶ If using fresh uncooked chicken, slice it into roughly 2 cm chunks. It does not matter whether you use chicken breasts or thighs or a mixture of both. Generally chicken thighs have more flavour and it is better to buy ready skinned chicken. I usually use one chicken breast per person and three or four chicken thighs.
- ▶ Slice the bacon, four rashers will do for a family of four, but you can add more if you want . Fry it in a frying pan with a little cooking oil. When cooked remove it from the pan and then add the chicken, in two batches, to the bacon flavoured oil. Season with a little salt and pepper but remember that the bacon is quite salty. Cook the chicken until it is no longer pink and is cooked through, about 10 minutes is usually enough as the chicken will continue cooking in the oven later. Leave to one side.

Making the White Sauce

- ▶ Melt 50 g of butter in a deep saucepan.
- ▶ Add 50 g of flour, any flour will do, and whisk until the flour is absorbed by the butter.
- ▶ Whisking all the time with a whisk, gradually add one pint of milk a little at a time.
- ▶ It will start off quite runny but will thicken when it comes to the boil.
- ▶ When it has thickened, turn the heat right down and cook out the flour for at least five minutes, stirring all the time. If it goes lumpy just pass it through a sieve and return to the saucepan.
- ▶ When the sauce is smooth, glossy and thick, season it with salt and pepper. If adding fresh herbs such as parsley or tarragon, chop them finely and add them now. They do add flavour but are not essential.

Assembling the Pie

- ▶ Mix the cooked chicken and bacon into the white sauce.
- ▶ Drain the leeks, saving the cooking water, and add to the rest of the ingredients.
- ▶ If the sauce seems a little thick you can add some of the leek cooking water which will add extra flavour and loosen up the sauce.
- ▶ Mix it all together and then tip into the pie dish that you are using. It can be metal or ceramic but must be oven proof!
- ▶ Unwrap and unroll the puff pastry- make sure you take it out of the fridge at least 10 minutes before you need to use it as it makes it easier to unroll.
- ▶ Cut some thin strips of pastry and use it to make a rim all around the top edge of the dish.
- ▶ Cut the pastry lid to fit the top of the pie.
- ▶ Brush beaten egg on the pastry edging in the dish and then place the pastry lid on top.

The Finishing Touches

- ▶ Brush the top of the pie all over with beaten egg.
- ▶ You can make a design on the top by running a sharp knife across the top, first in one direction and then the other, to make a diamond pattern. Just don't press too hard so that the slits go through to the pie beneath.
- ▶ If you have any pastry scraps you can cut out leaves and put them on the top and then glaze with more beaten egg.
- ▶ Make a small hole in the top of the pie to let out the steam.
- ▶ Bake in a pre-heated oven for 40 minutes at 180 degrees or gas mark 4.
- ▶ Check the pie after 20 minutes, if the top is browning too quickly, cover it loosely with tin foil.

Enjoy Your Pie!

- ▶ Serve with the vegetables of your choice and gravy if you wish.
- ▶ You can re-heat leftovers in the oven or the microwave quite safely or you can freeze them for another time.

Feel free to add different seasonings or vegetables the great thing about pies is that you can use what you have to hand and they always taste great.