

Chicken Potpie with Lemon and Thyme

Serves 8

This single-crust pie is the something that feeds your heart with warmth and memory, and piques your interest with a few twists and turns. Growing up with Swanson Pot Pies, I decided to break out of the shell and try multiple recipes that would deliver just the right touch. This is the pie that was at the end of my journey. Gently cooked and focused on quality ingredients, it may be my favorite fall meal. If pie crust frightens you, make the filling and place baking powder biscuits on top for something more cobbler-esque.

1 4-pound chicken

1 quart (4 cups) homemade chicken stock

1 large yellow onion, cut in half

4 dried bay leaves

1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns

2 bunches fresh thyme

1 celery stalk, cut into thirds

8 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, divided

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon sugar

24 tablespoons (3 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, divided

3 large egg yolks

9 ounces new potatoes, scrubbed and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces (small is key)

12 ounces pearl onions, blanched and peeled

3 medium leeks, white and pale-green parts, sliced into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick rounds,

2 medium carrots (buy them with the tops on – they're sweeter), peeled and sliced into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick rounds

16 ounces white-button mushrooms, wiped clean, halved if large

1 cup milk

2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Zest of 3 lemons

Juice of 1 lemon, or to taste

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon heavy cream

1. Combine the chicken, chicken stock, yellow onion, bay leaves, peppercorns, ¼ of the thyme sprigs, and celery in a stockpot, and add enough water to cover your chicken and any vegetables. Bring the pot to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, for 1 hour.
2. Pick enough thyme leaves to make a generous 3-tablespoons. Reserve 2 tablespoons thyme for later. In a food processor, pulverize the Parmesan cheese until it is completely processed and no large pieces remain. Combine 2 ½ cups flour, ¼ teaspoon salt, and 1 tablespoon thyme leaves in the bowl of the processor with the cheese. Pulse to incorporate the dry ingredients. Cut 16 tablespoons of chilled butter into small cubes, add to the dry ingredients in the processor, and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. While the food processor is running, add approximately 6 tablespoons of ice water and 2 egg yolks, and process until the dough holds together. Turn the dough out onto plastic wrap, flatten into a circle, and wrap well; refrigerate at least one hour. Add additional water if you feel that your dough is too dry; but refrain from adding too much, (extra water + flour = chewy gluten = no flakes in your crust).
3. Drain your chicken, discard the vegetable solids, and reserve the stock. After the chicken is cool enough to handle, remove the skin from the chicken, and remove all the chicken from the carcass. Shred the chicken meat into bite-size strips, and set aside. Strain the stock through cheesecloth, which will catch any stray bits of debris. Set aside 2 cups of the stock. Reserve the remaining stock for another use.
4. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Melt the remaining 8 tablespoons butter in a large sauté pan or Dutch Oven over medium-high heat. Add red potatoes and pearl onions; cook, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes, until potatoes begin to turn golden. Add leeks, carrots, and mushrooms; cook 5 minutes more. Add remaining ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon flour, and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the reserved chicken stock and the milk, and bring to a simmer. Cook until thick and bubbly, stirring constantly, 2 to 3 minutes. Make sure to scrape the bottom of your pan, as the flour will want to adhere to hot surfaces, and nobody likes burnt gravy! Add the reserved chicken pieces, parsley, the remaining 2 tablespoons of thyme, the lemon zest, lemon

juice, remaining 2 teaspoons of salt, and the pepper; transfer to an ovenproof casserole. Set aside.

5. Roll out the dough until it is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, and transfer to a baking sheet. Transfer to the refrigerator, and allow the dough to chill 15 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining yolk and heavy cream to make an egg wash. Working quickly, place the dough over the top of the chicken mixture, and tuck the extra dough around the edges. Cut slits on the top to allow the steam to escape. Brush with the egg wash, and place on a baking sheet. Bake until the crust is golden, 40 to 45 minutes. Serve hot.

-OurLocaltopia 2013-



www.ourlocaltopia.com