

Coorong Angus Beef pie with red wine, fennel and green olives

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Maggie Beer shares her humble angus beef pie, perfect for a cooler day when hearty meals go a long way.

Although I usually make this pie with my Sour-cream Pastry, when given the challenge of making it with a luscious gluten-free pastry I couldn't believe just how wonderful it was. While I slowly braise the meat in a crockpot on its lowest setting, it could easily be cooked in a heavy-based cast-iron casserole over low heat with a simmer mat or in a 120°C oven for a few hours.

M

Pastry

- 2 tsp salt
- 90 g unsalted butter
- 150 g gluten-free flour (I use a mix of potato flour, rice flour and maize flour), plus ½ cup extra for dusting
- 2 g xanthan gum
- 3 x 57 g eggs

Filling

- Flour, for dusting
- Sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 kg Coorong Angus [beef chuck](#), or other quality beef chuck, cut into 3 cm cubes
- Extra-virgin olive oil,
 - for cooking
 - 400 ml shiraz
 - 1 medium-large [fennel](#) bulb, trimmed and finely chopped
 - 400 g golden shallots, peeled
 - 4 cloves garlic, chopped
 - 2 cups (500 ml) veal or chicken stock
 - 1 sprig rosemary
 - 6 sprigs thyme
 - 2 fresh bay leaves, finely chopped
 - Rind of 1 orange
 - 16 green [olives](#), pitted
 - 1 egg, beaten

Method

Season the flour with salt and pepper, then toss the meat in the seasoned flour, shaking off any excess. In a large deep frying pan, seal the meat in olive oil over high heat in small batches until all the meat is browned.

Heat a crockpot to its highest setting, then transfer the sealed meat to it. Deglaze the frying pan with the wine, reducing it by three-quarters over high heat, then add the wine to the crockpot. Return the frying pan to the stove, then add more olive oil and sauté the fennel and shallots over medium heat for 6 to 8 minutes or until soft. Add the garlic and continue to sauté for another 5 minutes.

Transfer the vegetables to the crockpot, then add stock to the frying pan, bring to a rapid boil over high heat then add it to the crockpot with the herbs. Cook on the highest setting for 30 minutes, then turn to the lowest setting and cook at this low temperature for about 6 hours (or even overnight), until the meat is melt-in-the-mouth tender, adding the orange rind and olives in the last 20 minutes. Let the beef mixture cool.

Meanwhile, make and chill the pastry as instructed:

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In a heavy-based saucepan, combine the salt, butter and 250 ml water. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and add the flour and xanthan gum gradually, stirring with a wooden spoon. Reduce the temperature to low and continue to cook until the pastry is well combined and is coming away from the sides of the pan. Remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature.

Whisk eggs to combine, then slowly add them bit by bit to the pastry mixture, incorporating fully before adding the next bit; you may not need all the egg mixture.

Turn the pastry out onto a bench that has been dusted with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup gluten-free flour to assist rolling, then knead until shiny. Try to incorporate as little flour as possible so the pastry does not become too crumbly.

Chill the pastry for 20 minutes, then, using a rolling pin, roll the pastry between 2 pieces of baking paper, which have been greased on both sides. Roll the pastry until it is 5 mm thick, then use it to line a 24 cm tart or pie tin.

To blind bake, preheat the oven to 200°C. Line the pastry case with foil, then cover with pastry weights. Blind bake the pastry case for 15 minutes, then remove the foil and pastry weights and bake for another 5 minutes.

To assemble the pies, roll pastry to a 5 mm thickness and cut to fit the bases of 8 individual pie tins (you can buy standard-sized disposable foil pie tins from the supermarket). Make sure the pastry bases overhang the lips of the pie tins, and brush the bases with beaten egg, to help seal in the juices. Cut out the pastry tops.

Divide the beef mixture among the pie tins and cover with the pastry tops. Fold the edges of the pastry to seal, then brush the tops of the pies with beaten egg. Return the pies to the refrigerator for the pastry to really set; about 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Place the pie tins on a baking tray and bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

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