

Beef Steak and Kidney Pie

Serves 6-8

1 beef kidney
900g (2lb) good stewing steak, eg. rump
2 tablespoons (2 American tablespoons + 2 teaspoons) seasoned white flour
1 large onion
1 large carrot
25g (1oz/1/4 stick) butter, approx.
600ml (1 pint/2 1/2 cups) homemade beef stock
225g (8oz) mushrooms
Bouquet garni
Roux (optional)
225g (8oz) puff, flaky or rough puff pastry (see recipe)

Peel the kidney, cut out the core and cut the kidney into 2cm (3/4 inch) chunks approx. soak in water with a pinch of salt while you prepare the other ingredients. Cut the steak into 2.5cm (1 inch) pieces approx. Slice the onion and carrot into 1cm (1/2 inch) thick slices. Melt a little butter in a frying pan and lightly brown the onion, add in the carrot, transfer to a casserole.

Turn up the heat and toss the meat and dried kidney pieces in well-seasoned flour and cook in the pan until lightly brown on all sides, add to the casserole, pour the stock into the pan, bring to the boil and scrape the pan to dissolve the bits of sediment and caramelized juices. Pour this over the meat and add the bouquet garni. Season with salt and pepper. Cover with the lid and simmer in the oven 140°-150°C/275°-300°F/gas mark 1-2, for about 1 1/4-1 1/2 hours.

Slice the mushrooms thinly and sauté in the remainder of the butter, season with salt and pepper, add to the casserole about 20 minutes before the end of cooking. When the meat is cooked, taste the juice, if it is a little weak, strain off into another saucepan and reduce to concentrate the flavour, or if it is too liquid whisk in a little roux. Correct seasoning. This filling may be kept overnight or even for days before being used, in fact the flavour improves. Use for Steak and Kidney Pie or Steak and Oyster Pudding.

To Cover the Pie

Put the filling into a dish. Roll out the pastry into a sheet 5mm (1/4 inch) thick, cut several strips to fit onto the lip of the pie dish. Rest the pastry for 5 minutes after rolling to prevent it from shrinking back. Brush the 'lips' with cold water and press the strips of pastry firmly onto the dish. Brush the pastry strips with cold water and then press the lid of pastry firmly down onto the edges, trim off the excess pastry. Flute the edges and scallop with the back of a knife, cut some pastry leaves from the excess pastry, egg wash the pie, decorate with the pastry leaves. Make a hole in the centre, egg wash again and bake in a preheated oven 230°C/450°F/gas mark 8 for 10-15 minutes, reduce the heat to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6 and continue to bake until the pastry is cooked through and filling is bubbling. Garnish with a sprig of parsley and serve.

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