

# Proper beef, ale & mushroom pie



## Method

1. Start by braising the beef. If you're using the porcini, cover them in boiling water for 20 mins, then squeeze out but keep the soaking water. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Heat half the oil in a large casserole dish, brown the meat really well in batches, then set aside. Add the onions and carrots to the pan, adding a drizzle more oil, then cook on a low heat for 5 mins until coloured. Add the soaked mushrooms, sizzle for 1 min more, then scatter over the sugar and flour, stirring until the flour turns brown. Tip the meat and any juices back into the pan and give it all a good stir. Pour over the ale, stock and porcini soaking liquid, discarding the last few drops. Season stew, tuck in the herbs and bring everything to a simmer. Cover with a lid and place in the oven for about 2 hrs, until the meat is really tender.

2. While the stew is cooking, heat a drop more oil in a frying pan and sizzle the bacon for 3 mins until crisp. Turn up the heat, add the mushrooms and cook for 4 mins until golden. Remove from the heat



## Ingredients

### For the beef

- small handful dried porcini
- mushrooms (about 10g) - not essential but very tasty
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1kg braising steak (buy this as a whole piece and cut it yourself into large chunks)
- 2 large onion, roughly chopped
- 4 large carrots, chopped into large chunks
- 2 tsp golden caster sugar
- 4 tbsp plain flour
- 300ml dark ale
- 2 beef stock cube mixed with 400ml boiling water
- small bunch each thyme, bay leaf and parsley, tied together
- 200g smoked bacon lardons, or chopped rashers

mushrooms and cook for 4 mins until golden. Remove from the heat and, when the stew is cooked, stir them through. Leave everything to cool completely – better still, make this up to 2 days in advance and keep it in the fridge as the pie will be better if the filling is fridge-cold when added. Can also be frozen for up to 3 months and defrosted when needed.

3. Make the pastry up to 2 days before you want to assemble the pie. Crumble the flour and lard, or butter, together with a generous pinch of sea salt until completely combined, then add up to 200ml ice-cold water to make a soft dough. This can be done in a food processor if you want. Knead the pastry, then wrap in cling film and leave to rest in the fridge for at least 1 hr. The pastry can be made up to 2 days ahead and kept in the fridge or frozen for up to a month.

4. When you want to make the pie, heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7 and place a flat baking tray in the oven. Heavily grease a 24-28cm pie dish and dust well with flour. Cut a third off the pastry and set aside. Roll out the pastry to a thick-ish round that will easily line the pie dish with an overhang, then line the tin. Add the beef to the dish using a slotted spoon so some gravy is left in the container, as you don't want too much sauce in the pie. You want the filling to be slightly higher than the rim of the dish. If you have a bit too much, set it aside.

5. Roll out the remaining pastry to a thick round big enough to cover the dish. Brush the edges of the pastry in the dish with egg yolk, then cover with the pastry lid. Trim the edges, crimp the pastry, then re-roll your trimmings to make a decoration, if you like – I always decorate my pies with pastry leaves. Brush the top heavily with egg. Make a few little slits in the centre of the pie, place on the hot baking tray, then bake for 40 mins until golden. Leave the pie to rest for 10 mins while you heat up the gravy left in the container. Serve the pie at the table with a jug of gravy and a big pile of something green and leafy.

200g chestnut mushroom, halved

### For the pastry

650g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

250g lard or cold butter (or half of each), diced, plus extra for greasing

1 egg yolk, beaten, to glaze