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## Bobotie (South African Meat Pie)

I almost feel uncomfortable describing bobotie as a type of meat loaf, because it's so much more than that. A Cape Town specialty and one of South Africa's best-known dishes, it generally consists of spiced meat—normally beef, sometimes lamb—mixed with chutney and tamarind paste and milk-soaked bread, poured into a dish, topped with a custard of egg and milk, and baked until it's golden on top. The dish's origins go back to the mid-17th century, when the first Malay slaves were brought to the Cape of Good Hope, and with them, their cooking. At the same time Dutch colonizers brought a taste for sweet things—hence the golden raisins mixed in with the meat; Indian immigrants, who began arriving in the late 19th century, contributed warming curry spices, giving rise to the classically Cape Malay balancing act between sour, spicy, sweet, and savory flavors that makes bobotie so satisfying. Often almonds are part of the recipe, and even bananas, but there are limits to what you can do and still call it bobotie. I believe the traditional way is the best way. —*Reuben Riffel, chef-owner of the Reuben's restaurants in South Africa*

SERVES 8

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz. Asian tamarind paste
- 2 slices square white sandwich bread
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 lb. ground lamb shoulder
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. curry powder
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds
- 3 tbsp. golden raisins
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 2 eggs



Credit: Todd Coleman

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Break tamarind paste into small pieces and place in a small bowl; cover with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup boiling water, and let sit until soft, about 30 minutes. Massage and stir paste and water together with your fingers until paste dissolves; pour through a fine strainer into a bowl, and set tamarind juice aside. Meanwhile, tear bread into small pieces and place in a small bowl; cover with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk and let sit until bread soaks up milk; set aside.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat; add lamb, and cook, stirring occasionally, until well browned all over and all moisture evaporates, about 25 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, and set aside. Return skillet to heat along with butter, and add onions and garlic; cook, stirring, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add curry powder and sugar, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes; transfer to bowl with lamb along with reserved tamarind juice, soaked bread, 3 tbsp. almonds, raisins, lemon juice and zest, and 1 egg. Season with salt and pepper, and mix until evenly combined. Transfer to a 9" deep-dish pie plate, and spread evenly over the bottom.
3. Heat oven to 375°. Whisk together remaining milk and egg in a small bowl, season with salt and pepper, and pour over meat mixture in dish. Bake until custard is set on top, golden brown, and meat mixture is heated through, about 30 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with remaining almonds; let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

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