



RECIPE OF THE WEEK: 04/10/2021

Kotopita (Greek Chicken Pie)

This is a delicious and sensational chicken pie which will entice your guests or family. The finished product will have a crispy topping and aromatic filling. This is a classic, traditional recipe which has been baked in villages and towns for over one hundred and thirty years.

Kotopita nowadays is made with any sized chicken, although in the old days it used to be baked with very small chickens or poussins – or alternatively with ornithes which are normal-size or older chickens.

The method of boiling meat with a set of spices and then shredding and cooking it in another way, probably came from the ancient Persians, spread throughout the Middle East and the Mediterranean and even as far away as India. The idea was to create exquisite flavours to be enjoyed without the absence of chewy meat.

Serves 6

Ingredients

2 free-range, organic poussins 700

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2 free-range, organic poussins 700-800g each, or a whole chicken, about 1.8kg

300ml stock (see recipe below)

80g unsalted butter

120g plain flour

6 medium organic, free range eggs

125g kefalotyri or parmesan cheese

1 tsp freshly ground nutmeg

1 tsp cayenne pepper

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

500g filo pastry

250g butter, melted

2 tbsp sesame seeds

For the vegetable stock

4 medium onions, peeled and quartered

3 garlic cloves, crushed

2 celery stalks, including some leaves

2 large carrots, peeled and cut into chunks

2 leeks, washed and cut into chunks

5-6 whole peppercorns

2 parsley stalks

2 sprigs of thyme

2 bay leaves

pinch of sea salt



Method

1. Place the poussins or chicken in a large stock pot with all the chicken stock ingredients. Cover with water so the chicken is just submerged. Bring to the boil and cover with a lid. Simmer for 55-60 minutes, until the chicken meat is falling off the bone.
2. Remove from its juices and set aside. When it's cool enough to handle, remove all the flesh from the bones and shred into longish bite-sized pieces. Discard any bones and skin from the meat. Strain the stock and set aside. Discard the ingredients of the stock, apart from the onion. Finely chop the onions or liquidate to a puree and add to the chicken pieces. Measure the stock and if it is not 300ml, make it up to this by adding milk or cream.
3. Now, prepare the bechamel sauce. Over a medium heat, place the butter in a heavy-based saucepan, until it is foaming but not burning. Turn the heat down and gradually add the flour and stir with a wooden spoon until smooth. Cook, stirring all the time, for 1-2 minutes until the roux turns to a golden-brown colour. Gradually add the chicken stock, 100ml at a time, stirring until smooth after each addition. Bring to the boil, stirring all the time and then remove from the heat.
4. Beat the eggs, one at a time, into the béchamel sauce, then add the cheese, nutmeg and paprika. Season to taste. Stir in the chicken and boiled onions and set aside.
5. Heat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas 7.
6. Keep the filo pastry covered with a damp tea towel. Butter a 35x25x5cm baking sheet and line with a sheet of filo. Brush it with melted butter and repeat the process, until you have used five sheets. Do not worry if the filo overlaps the baking sheet. Spoon the chicken mixture onto the filo pastry. Top with five more layers of filo over the chicken, brushing each layer with butter. Trim any protruding layers of filo, brush the entire surface of the top layers with butter and roll down the edges. Using a sharp knife, score the top three layers of filo pastry into diamond or square shapes. Sprinkle with about 30ml water so that the filo topping will come out crispy after baking. Now, sprinkle the surface with the sesame seeds.
7. Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes, reduce the heat of the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4 and cook for a further 45-50 minutes, until the pastry is golden.
8. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for 10-15 minutes in order to achieve a crispy topping.
9. Serve with a green salad or a combination of vegetables, such as broccoli or asparagus.