



BRAISED VENISON PIE WITH SOUR CREAM PASTRY
WITH
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE
RIEBEEKSRIVIER WESTERN SLOPES

Recipes by Ilse van der Merwe

Making a pie from scratch is a labour of love that comes with great reward. Nothing beats the taste and smell of freshly baked pastry with an oozy, rich, fall-apart filling - it is comfort food perfection.

INGREDIENTS (serves 6)

45 ml (3 tablespoons) olive oil	6 juniper berries, crushed in a pestle & mortar
250 g smoked streaky bacon, cut into cubes	1 teaspoon ground white pepper
2 medium onions, finely chopped	2 teaspoons ground coriander
4 cloves garlic, finely grated	15 ml flour
1,25 kg boneless venison meat, cut into larger chunks (springbok, kudu or even ostrich)	250 ml red wine (or beef stock)
salt, to taste	125 ml (1/2 cup) freshly squeezed lemon juice
3 bay leaves	30 ml (2 tablespoons) balsamic vinegar
6 whole cloves, crushed in a pestle & mortar	250 ml water
	1/4 cup plain yoghurt

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 170 C. In a heavy based large pot (with lid suitable for oven use) over medium heat, heat the oil and fry the bacon, onions, garlic until the onions are soft and translucent. Remove from the pot and set aside. Add the meat to the pot and fry on all sides until brown (work in batches if necessary), seasoning with salt. Add the bay leaves, cloves, juniper berries, white pepper and coriander and stir for a minute, then add the flour and stir to coat all over. Add the wine, lemon juice, vinegar and water and bring to a simmer. Cover with a lid and braise in the oven at 170 C for 2,5-3 hours or until very soft, checking half way through if you need to add more water. In the meantime, prepare the sour cream pastry (see below). When the meat is very tender, add the yoghurt and season with more salt if necessary. Stir to loosen the meat strands (pull them apart with a fork if needed) and leave to cool. When the pastry is ready (see below) and rolled out, line a greased ovenproof deep pie dish with a thin layer of pastry, leaving a little overhang. Transfer the meat filling into the lined pie dish and smooth the top. Cover with a sheet of rolled out pastry (see below) and trim the sides. Use a fork to press indentations all around the edges. Cut decorative patterns from the trimmings, if you want to. Cut small slits in the pastry for steam to escape, paint the top with egg-wash, and bake in a pre-heated oven at 180 degrees Celsius for about 50-60 minutes or until golden brown and puffed. Serve with your choice of sides like rice and vegetables or salad.



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SOUR CREAM PASTRY

If you don't mind extra effort, this pastry is absolutely stunning and really worth making. But if you are looking for a quick option, rather use store-bought puff pastry.

Start making the pastry while your meat is marinating. It takes a good few hours to roll and rest.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups white bread flour

1 teaspoon salt

250 g cold butter

1 cup sour cream

METHOD

Sift flour and salt together. Cut butter into small cubes, and rub with your fingers into the flour mixture until it resembles big breadcrumbs. Add the sour cream, and stir it into the flour mixture until it starts to come together. Knead lightly into a ball (don't add any liquid, it will eventually become a soft ball of dough). Cover with plastic and rest the dough for at least 30 minutes, or overnight, in the fridge. Roll out into a rectangle on a floured surface, then fold into thirds (when facing horizontally, fold the right side to the middle, and the left side over both layers to the middle, making 3 layers). Roll out again, and fold into thirds. Repeat a third time. Return the dough to the fridge for another 30 minutes. Now repeat the rolling and folding process. Rest again in the fridge for 30 minutes. The dough is now ready to roll out into a 5 mm thick sheet (on a lightly floured surface) before baking.



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