

Pretty Classic Chicken Pot Pie

Serves 4-6

If you like stuffing, if you like chicken, if you like things baked beneath a buttery crust, then this chicken pot pie is for you. If you don't like celery, you may want to sit this one out (just kidding, use fennel or carrots instead). Want to make it vegetarian? Use mushrooms as you would the chicken, browned in plenty of fat before proceeding with the recipe. Don't have good puff pastry? Use pie crust. This recipe, while appearing fussy, is actually extremely flexible (relatable!).

I am confident that this recipe is foolproof, but will still offer a word of caution against a soupy filling: counterintuitively, your mixture will actually thin out slightly when baking beneath whatever crust you place on top, so you want the chicken mixture to be on the thicker side before it goes into the oven.

2 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts or thighs (smaller work better here)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons olive oil

4 celery stalks, thinly sliced

6 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

1 tablespoon thyme leaves, coarsely chopped

¼ cup all-purpose flour

½ cup white wine

3 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock, or three cups water and one tablespoon Better than Bouillon

½ cup frozen peas (sadly, a whole bag is too many peas for my taste)

¼ cup finely chopped parsley

¼ cup finely chopped chives

2 tablespoons finely chopped tarragon

1 (12- or 14-ounce) sheet (or 2 8½-ounce sheets pressed together at the edges) frozen puff pastry, thawed, rolled into a 12-inch circle

1 large egg, beaten

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper, set aside.

2. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large (8"-10") skillet (preferably cast iron or other heavy bottomed skillet) over medium heat. Sear chicken, skin-side down, until deeply golden brown and most of the fat has begun to render out, 5-8 minutes. Flip chicken and continue to cook until evenly browned and cooked through on the other side, an additional 8-10 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate or cutting board, leaving the drippings behind in the skillet.

3. Add the onion and garlic to the skillet, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until mostly softened with a bit of caramelization at the edges, 3-5 minutes. Add celery and thyme, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally until the celery is tender and just cooked through, 5-8 minutes. Add wine and cook, stirring constantly until it is mostly evaporated, about a minute or so.

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4. Add the flour on top of the vegetables and stir to coat them all. Cook, stirring constantly until the flour has started to turn a light golden brown with no white, floury bits left, 3–4 minutes (you're toasting the flour here, but because of the vegetables, might take longer than a usual roux).
5. Slowly add the chicken broth or stock $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time, using a wooden spoon to blend and scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the skillet. Do not worry about lumps or it looking too thick—it'll smooth out, promise. Once all the broth or stock is added, bring to a simmer and remove from heat.
6. Remove any bones and cartilage-y bits (discard/compost) from the chicken and shred the meat and skin into bite-size pieces (alternatively, use a knife and fork to cut into bite-size pieces). Add the picked chicken, peas, parsley, tarragon and chives and stir to combine. Season one and final time (lots of seasoning in this recipe) with salt and pepper.
7. Carefully unfold the puff pastry and if you feel like it needs it, smooth it out using a rolling pin (or your hands). Working quickly, place it on top of the skillet (do not worry about it being a perfect circle), letting some of the dough hang off the sides (this will keep it from shrinking too much).
8. Whisk the egg with 1 teaspoon of water and brush it onto the top of the puff pastry. Cut three $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slits, about 1-inch apart. Sprinkle with salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Place the skillet on top of the parchment-lined sheet pan to catch any drips as it bakes.
9. Bake until puff pastry is deeply golden brown, baked through all the way and filling has thickened considerably, 30–40 minutes.
10. Remove from heat and let cool slightly before eating.