

# Culinary Outlook

## Savory potpies ring out in the spring

### FOOD



**AILEEN CLAIRE**

A steaming homemade potpie made in less than 30 minutes does wonders for a jaded winter appetite. Roll into a spring mood with some short-cut cooking.

The base of the first potpie is a pre-cooked chicken breast or slices of leftover chicken which are enhanced by fresh sugar-snap peas, potatoes and carrots. A "simmered-in" flavor that normally takes one or two hours of slow simmering comes from a blending of rosemary, thyme and pepper sauce.

Another potpie is in the spirit of Hungarian country cooking. It combines bacon, rutabagas and stew beef topped with a flaky pie crust straight from the supermarket. This potpie does rely upon longer simmering since Hungarian country cooking commonly uses tougher cuts of meat and leftover pieces of Sunday roasts for this all-in-one meal. Again, seasonings are crucial to bring out the flavor of the beef and vegetables.

Make several at a time since both potpies freeze and reheat well.

#### SNAPPY PEA AND CHICKEN POTPIE

- 2 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 1 medium-size baking potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 1/2 cups sliced carrots (1/2-inch slices)
- 1 cup frozen pearl onions
- 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 medium red bell pepper, coarsely diced
- 4 ounces (about 1 cup) sugar-snap peas trimmed and halved lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour



HOMEMADE potpies bring a country-kitchen touch to a meal.

- 8 ounces cooked chicken-breast meat, cut in 1-by-3 inch strips
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
- 1 egg, beaten with 1 teaspoon water

In a large heavy saucepan, bring chicken broth to a boil over high heat. Add potato, carrots, pearl onions, rosemary, hot pepper sauce and salt. Reduce heat to medium; cover and simmer 8 to 10 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Add bell pepper and sugar-snap peas; boil 30 seconds; just until peas turn bright green.

Drain vegetables through a colander suspended over a bowl to catch

the chicken broth; set aside. Melt butter in saucepan over low heat. Stir in flour and cook, 3-4 minutes, stirring

constantly. Pour in 2 cups of the reserved chicken broth, and whisk until smooth. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low and simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until thickened and bubbly.

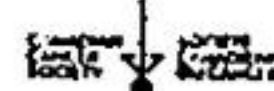
Put chicken strips in bottoms of four lightly buttered ramekins or souffle dishes. Top chicken with vegetables. Spoon sauce into ramekins.

Defrost pastry and unfold on floured surface according to package directions. Cut pastry into four rectangles. Brush outside rims of ramekins with some of the beaten egg mixture. Place a pastry rectangle over

each ramekin and press firmly around edges to seal. Trim dough to make neat edge. Brush tops with the beaten egg mixture. Heat oven to 475 degrees. Put ramekins on baking sheet and bake 10-12 minutes, until pastry is puffed and well-browned.

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