

Minichefs: homemade chicken and sweetcorn pies



Time taken: 1 1/2 hours

Ages involved: 3 to 6

Number of children: 4

Makes 12 small pies

Tools used:

Kitchen scissors

Small mixing bowls

Measuring cups and spoons

Rolling pin

Pastry brush

Silpat or baking tray

Pie cutters for making pie topper pastry shapes

Ingredients:

700g cooked chicken

Homemade pie sauce (recipe below)

1 1/2 cups sweetcorn, cooked (tastiest fresh off the cob , or flash frozen)

2 rolls ready made puff pastry

Mixed herbs

Egg wash for sealing and glazing pies (1 beaten egg mixed with 2Tbs milk)

Flour for sprinkling the surface in preparation for pastry rolling

How to make simple pie sauce:

1. Melt 50ml butter in a medium sized pan on the stove

2. Remove from the heat and use a whisk to stir in 1/4 cup flour and 1Tbs chicken stock powder

3. Next add 1Tbs lemon juice (freshly squeezed is best) and 300ml hot milk and whisk
4. Return to the stove on a high heat and bring to the boil. Stir continuously since the sauce will thicken quickly. TIP - add the zest of half a lemon to the sauce mix for a nice, zingy flavour.

How to make the pies:

1. Set the oven to 200 degrees C
2. Unroll a sheet of puff pastry and cut a 3cm strip off one of the short edges. Flatten slightly with a rolling pin and use this to make some creative pie toppers. We experimented with some cute homemade pie crust cutters (read more and watch a video).
3. Chop chicken into a bowl (half a cup per child)
4. Add sauce, corn and a sprinkle of mixed herbs and mix well (1/4 cup sauce and 2Tbs corn per child). TIP: Add fried mushrooms or any fresh, cooked vegetables to the filling.
5. Cut the balance of the pastry roll into 6 squares. Using two rolls, you'll have enough pastry for 12 small pies (and two 3cm wide strips for toppers).
6. Gently roll out the pastry pieces into rectangles and brush edges with egg wash – the egg wash acts like glue to ensure the edges close properly, which is good.
7. Place half of the filling onto one half of each piece of pastry leaving 1cm space around the edges, then fold the pastry over to cover and crimp the edges ever so gently with a fork
8. Paint the back of a pastry decoration with eggwash and glue it onto the top of the pie. Now paint all over with the eggwash which will help to produce perfectly browned pies. This will make you feel like an egg artist, which is awesome.
9. Poke a hole or two into the top of each pie to allow steam to escape, then place in the oven on a silicone mat or baking tray for 15mins or until crisp and browned
10. Remove from the oven and allow to cool since the inside of the pies will be piping hot. Serve with roasted veggies or a salad (or tomato sauce, but don't tell anyone).