

## Chicken Pot Pie

by Joseph Erdos

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I have a special fondness for pot pie. It's one of those all-in-one meals that always hits my comfort spot. And it's a welcome dish to eat on a cold and rainy day like the ones we're having this season. The origins of pot pies can be traced back to the English settlers who brought their love for pies to America. In the States I had never eaten a savory pie. It was always the frozen pies that scared me into believing that pies were no good. Not until my traveling in England did I finally eat my first savory pie. On first bite I fell in love with the flavorful meat and vegetable filling topped with flaky, buttery pastry.

While studying abroad in London, I came to know and appreciate the local cuisine. It was the discovery of a small eatery that really caught my attention and helped change my mind about pies. Every day on my way to class through an alley passage I couldn't help but notice a sign that read "Upstairs Pie Room" right next to an unassuming door. One day a group of us decided to find out what this room was all about. We discovered a homey little restaurant with a menu of traditional English savory pies. It was was one of the best things that could happen. That summer the Pie Room ended up becoming a regular haunt for all of us. The experience turned out to be one of my most memorable, one that I repeated many times until I had tried every pie on the menu.

Inspired by all those pies, I created a pot pie recipe that is as classic and original to the one I remember eating in London. First, chicken breasts are roasted until tender. A thick sauce is made with butter, onions, flour, and stock to which hearty vegetables and the cubed chicken is added. The pie can be cooked in one large casserole dish, but since the Pie Room specialized in personal pies, I divided the mixture among oven-proof dishes. Each is topped with a round of puff pastry and baked until brown and bubbly. The end result is hard to resist and one bite may even convince you to visit the Pie Room and try all the pies for yourself.

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### Chicken Pot Pie

3 split chicken breasts  
olive oil  
fine sea salt  
freshly ground black pepper  
poultry seasoning  
4 tablespoons butter  
1 medium yellow onion, chopped  
1/4 cup all-purpose flour  
3 cups chicken stock  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
1 pound pearl onions, peeled and blanched for 4 minutes  
4 carrots, sliced and blanched for 2 minutes  
1-1/2 cups frozen peas  
1/2 cup finely chopped parsley  
1 pound puff pastry, recipe follows  
1 large egg, beaten, for egg wash

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Rinse chicken breasts and pat dry. Add to baking sheet. Drizzle with oil and rub all over. Season with salt, pepper, and poultry seasoning. Roast until juices run clear, about 30 to 40 minutes. An instant-read thermometer when inserted into the thickest part of the meat should read 165 degrees F. Let chicken cool until easy to handle. Discard skin and remove bones. Cut into large cubes.

Heat chicken stock until very hot. Pour a bit of stock into roasting pan to loosen brown bits; add it back into stock.

Melt butter in a large pot over medium-low heat. Add chopped onion and sauté until soft and translucent, about 10 minutes. Add flour and cook, constantly stirring, for 2 minutes. Pour in hot stock and stir to combine. Simmer on low, while stirring, until liquid thickens, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add cream, cubed chicken, pearl onions, carrots, peas, and parsley. Mix well to combine. Divide the mixture among 4 oven-proof bowls.

On a well-floured work surface, roll out puff pastry to 1/4-inch thick. Cut 4 discs to fit each bowl. Slash a few vent holes in each disc. Brush the edge of each bowl with egg wash. Place dough on top. Brush dough with egg wash. Place bowls on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. Bake until pastry is golden and filling is bubbling, about 40 minutes. Yield: 4 servings.

### Puff Pastry

Adapted from a recipe by Michel Richard in [Baking with Julia](#) by Dorie Greenspan.

2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

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1-1/4 cups cake flour  
1-1/2 teaspoons salt  
1-1/4 cups ice water  
2 cups (4 sticks) chilled unsalted butter

Combine flours and salt in a food processor. Pulse to aerate. Add the water and pulse until a ball forms. Remove and form into a disc. Slash the top in a tic-tac-toe pattern. Wrap in a damp towel and refrigerate for about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the butter between two sheets of plastic wrap and beat with a rolling pin until about 1-inch thick. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Unwrap the dough and place on a well-floured work surface, preferably marble or granite. Flatten and roll the dough into a large square. Roll the edges thin while keeping the center thicker. Place the butter in the middle of the dough and fold over the corners overlapping like an envelope. Press the rolling pin against the edges, making sure the package is square.

Make sure the work surface, dough, and rolling pin are well-floured. Roll the package of dough into a rectangle, three times as long as it is wide. Brush off any excess flour. Fold the dough in thirds, up from the bottom and down from the top, like a business letter. Rotate the dough counter-clockwise so that the closed fold is to the left.

Roll the dough into a rectangle again, and fold into thirds again. The second turn is now complete. Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Repeat again twice, wrap, and refrigerate. Then repeat again twice to equal six folds. Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate until ready to use. Leftover dough can be wrapped in plastic and frozen. Defrost before using. Yield: 2-1/2 pounds pastry.

*Joseph Erdos is a New York–based writer and editor, but above all a gastronome and oenophile. He shares his passion for food on his blog, [Gastronomer's Guide](#), which features unique recipes and restaurant reviews among many other musings on the all-encompassing topic of food. ☐☐☐*