

## Niton Chicken Pie

This is adapted from some posh online recipes when we had visitors from the North Island, and quite a lot of leeks to use up. They loved it, hope you do too. Fresh local farm-reared chicken is more expensive, but definitely adds flavour, so it's a worthwhile investment if you're making this for a special occasion.

### **Filling**

450ml chicken stock. (Stock cubes are just as good for this as fresh stock)  
100ml white wine. (The sort you get given on long-haul airlines is ideal, if you're looking for a way to re-purpose it...)  
3 chopped garlic cloves, or generous squeeze of garlic puree  
Tarragon. Parsley. Other herbs if you prefer  
225g carrots, peeled and sliced into batons.  
4 decent chicken breasts, chopped into generous chunks  
225g leeks, washed and thinly sliced  
2 tablespoons cornflour, mixed with 2 tablespoons water  
4 tablespoons creme fraiche, or single cream  
2 teaspoons mustard (or more, depending on your taste)

### **Pastry (Sufficient for a lid for a large pie-dish. If you want a pastry base, double the quantities)**

225gr plain flour  
100gr butter or hard margarine, diced  
tiny pinch salt

To make the pastry, rub the butter into the flour in a big bowl, until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the salt and about 3 tablespoons of cold water. I use a knife to mix to a firm dough as I don't have a food processor (and if I did have one, it would probably just sit at the back of the kitchen cupboard). Knead it gently (you're not on GBBO), wrap in cling film and leave in the fridge while you make the filling. You could make larger quantities of pastry and freeze it, as long as you remember it's approximately half fat to flour.



Put garlic, herbs and carrots into a large pan (or wok) with the chicken stock and white wine. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Add chicken and simmer for another 5 minutes. Scatter the leek slices on top, cover pan and simmer gently for another 10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

If you intend to have only a pastry lid on your pie, then tip the chicken and vegetable mix (reserving the stock) into an ovenproof pie dish. If you're hoping to feed a family of trenchermen, and want a pastry top and bottom to your pie, then line the pie dish with your pastry bottom first of all, and then put the filling in. This is quite a rich pie, and doesn't really need more than a pastry lid, but it's all a matter of taste.

Heat stock, but take from heat to add the cornflour. Return to hob, bring to the boil, stirring pan constantly. Remove from heat, and stir in the creme fraiche, mustard, tarragon and parsley.

When it's sufficiently cool, pour it over the chicken filling. Taste and adjust seasoning. It should be mouth-wateringly good...

Preheat the oven to 200C/gas 6/fan 180C.

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface, until it is about the thickness of a £1 coin. Place over filling, taking care to seal the edges. An egg wash, made with one beaten egg yolk will help to give it a nice golden colour, but I have also used just milk. Brush the wash over the pie, before placing in the oven. Make sure you've made a couple of small slits in the top to allow steam to escape. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, but keep an eye on it to make sure the pastry doesn't catch.

*Submitted by Janice Young, Niton.*

