

'I cannot make enough chicken pot pies. Regulars call on Tuesday mornings to reserve a pie, forcing me to erase them from the Tuesday specials board before we open for lunch. I keep doubling the number I make, but the demand grows to meet the expanded supply. I'm about to have a line out the door waiting for pot pies.'

— Rebecca Rather

All-Sold-Out Chicken Pot Pies

Christmas Eve 2004

Filling:

3 Tbsp. unsalted butter
1 medium-size yellow onion, chopped
1 large russet potato, peeled and diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, diced
8 oz. button mushrooms, sliced
½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 purchased cooked rotisserie chicken or 1 whole stewed chicken, cooled
8 oz. fresh green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces (optional)
1 (8-oz.) package frozen peas (optional)

Cream sauce:

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
1 cup all purpose flour
2½ cups chicken stock, preferably homemade
½ cup heavy whipping cream (optional)
Dash of hot pepper sauce, such as Tabasco
Salt and freshly ground white pepper

Crust:

1 cup (2 sticks) chilled unsalted butter
3 cups all purpose flour
10 oz. chilled cream cheese
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground white pepper
1 large egg

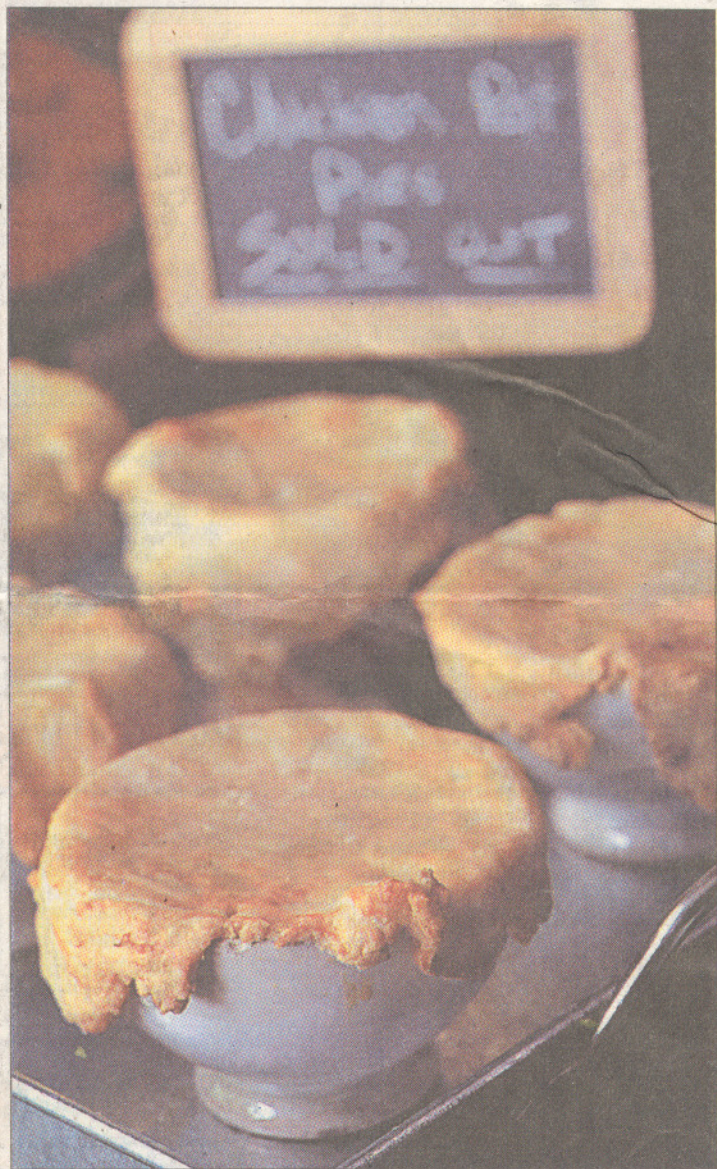
To make the filling: Melt the butter in a large sauté pan set over medium heat. Add the onion and potato; sauté for 5 minutes. Add the garlic, bell pepper and mushrooms and sauté about 15 minutes, until the potatoes are tender. Stir in the crushed red pepper and add salt and pepper to taste.

While the vegetables are sautéing, skin the chicken, pull the meat off the bones and shred the meat or cut into bite-sized pieces. Place the green beans in a microwave-safe bowl and add enough water to cover. Cover the dish and microwave on high power about 10 minutes, until the beans are tender. Drain thoroughly. Stir the beans, peas and chicken into the vegetable mixture. Set the filling aside.

To make the cream sauce: Melt the butter over medium heat in a large saucepan. Add the flour and whisk until smooth. Whisk in the chicken stock and cook the sauce over medium heat until it thickens to the consistency of a cream soup. Add the cream, hot pepper sauce and salt and white pepper to taste. Pour the cream sauce over the chicken filling and stir to combine. Fill individual 1 ¼-cup capacity oven-safe bowls three-quarters of the way to the top with the creamed chicken filling.

To make the crust: Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Cut the butter into 16 pieces. In the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, pulse the butter and flour until crumbly. Add the cream cheese, salt and white pepper. Continue pulsing until the dough forms a ball.

Set the dough on a flat surface dusted with flour. Use a floured rolling pin to roll the dough out to ¼-inch thickness. Measure the



Laurie Smith THE PASTRY QUEEN

diameter of the pot pie bowls — mine are about 4 inches across — and cut out dough rounds that are 1½ inches larger in diameter. Whisk the egg in a small bowl. Lay the dough rounds on top of the pot pies, making sure the dough hangs evenly over each bowl. Brush the dough lightly with the beaten egg. Bake the pies for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden brown. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

— 'The Pastry Queen'