

TOURTES POULET ET CHAMPIGNONS / FRENCH CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM TARTE

INGREDIENTS

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1/2 pound cremini or shiitake mushrooms, slices (or a mixture)
1 leek, white and light green parts, cut to 1 inch pieces and washed
1 clove garlic
3 teaspoons olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon herbes de Provence or dried thyme
1/4 cup water
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon butter
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup milk
2 tablespoon crème fraîche or heavy cream
1 tablespoon dry white wine
freshly grated nutmeg
1 sprig fresh thyme
1 egg yolk plus 1 teaspoon water, for egg wash
2 sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed

DIRECTIONS

Chop the chicken into bite-sized pieces. Wash the mushrooms, chop off the bottoms and slice thickly. Chop the shallot. Peel and halve the garlic clove. In a medium skillet, heat 1 teaspoon olive oil to shimmering. Add the chicken pieces. Stir until all the pieces are no longer pink. Then turn down the heat so that the chicken cooks without browning. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Add the herbes de Provence or dried thyme. Add 1/4 cup of water. Allow to simmer until the chicken is cooked through and most of the water has evaporated, about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and set aside in a work bowl.

In the same skillet, heat 1 teaspoon olive oil and 1 teaspoon butter to shimmering. Add the mushrooms and garlic halves. Cook, stirring, until the mushrooms are soft. Discard the garlic. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Stir. Add the mushrooms onto the chicken. Using the same large skillet, heat the final teaspoon of olive oil to shimmering. Add the chopped leek. Cook until wilted. Add into the chicken-mushroom mix.

Now make the Béchamel. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. When bubbly, add the flour. Stir briefly. Cook over a low flame for one minute. Add the milk, turn up the heat and stir or whisk until the sauce thickens. Simmer for five minutes. Turn off the heat.

Stir the cream and wine into the sauce. Sprinkle lightly with salt, pepper and grate in a little nutmeg. Strip the leaves from your sprig of thyme over the pot. Stir. Taste and adjust the seasonings as necessary. Stir in the chicken mixture.

Heat oven to 350F. Whisk together your egg wash in a small bowl and set aside.

Roll out your puff pastry gently to fit your 9-inch-deep pie plate. Line the pan, leaving a little to crimp to the top pastry. Unroll the second sheet of puff pastry for the top of the pan. Ladle the chicken mixture into the baking pan. Lay the cut-out round of pastry on top. Pinch the edges of the two pastry sheets together, folding them inward from the rim as you go to create a ridge. Then flute the ridge. Using a pastry brush, coat the top and rim of the pie with your egg wash. Cut a few slits into the crust to allow steam to escape. Bake the pie for about 30-35 minutes, until it is golden.

Serve straight out of the oven or reheat gently if serving later.