

*April Recipe*

## Stringy Cheese Pie

My daughter, Coco, has pronounced this pie as "the best, even better than the fish pies" (which she loves). The mozzarella melts and becomes very stringy. Quite a mess to serve but well worth it. Coco has even asked for it to be made on her birthday. Praise indeed.

**SERVES 4 GROWN-UPS OR 6 KIDS**



You will need a 22cm (8 ½ in) flan tin  
2 tbsp olive oil  
A large knob of butter, plus extra for greasing  
1 red onion, chopped  
2 red peppers, sliced, cored and deseeded  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
350g (12oz) tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
300g (10oz) short crust pastry  
A handful of basil leaves, chopped  
250g (9oz) mozzarella (2 average-sized packets), sliced

Heat the oil and butter in a large pan on a medium heat. Bung in the onion and peppers. Season with freshly ground pepper, and gently stew for 15 minutes. Stir from time to time to prevent it from burning or sticking to the pan. Then stir the tomatoes into the peppers and season with salt and pepper. Let the mixture simmer for about 40 minutes until you have a thickish sauce. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C (425°F/Gas 7). Butter and then line the flan tin

with the pastry, keeping back enough to make the lattice top. Prick the pastry base all over with a fork and cover with foil. Pop it in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. When it has finished baking, remove it from the oven to cool.

Once the pepper mixture has cooled, stir in the basil. Spoon half the peppers into the pastry case and spread them evenly over the base. Cover with half the mozzarella slices, then repeat the process, finishing with mozzarella slices on top.

Roll out the remaining pastry and cut it into six long strips, about the width of your finger. Place three across the pie one way, followed by the other three in the other direction to make a lattice. Press the ends down and pop the pie in the oven for 20 minutes. Check the pie after 10 minutes; if it looks like it might burn at the edges, cover it with foil.

This pie is great just on its own.