

January Recipe

My Mum's Steak and Kidney Pudding

Caroline Conran

My mum's steak and kidney pudding is like her. It's the best. This is her delicious recipe.

SERVES 6

You will need a 1 litre (1¾ pint) pudding basin

**FOR THE SUET PASTRY:**

100g (3½ oz) prepared suet, such as Atona
225g (8oz) self-raising flour
Salt
Iced water

FOR THE PUDDING:

900g (2lb) chuck stewing or braising steak, cut into 3cm (1in) cubes
225g (8oz) beef kidneys, trimmed well and cut into 3cm (1in) cubes
3 tbsp plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
50g (2oz) button mushrooms, cleaned
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce a dash of Tabasco
1 tbsp Chinese oyster sauce
A little beef stock (cube is okay) or water
Freshly ground black pepper

First prepare the pastry. Mix the suet, flour and salt in a bowl and, using a tablespoon at a time, slowly add enough iced water to bind. This can be done in a food processor, but don't over-process the mixture. Cover the pastry with cling film and chill for 20 minutes. Keep about a quarter of the pastry back

to make the lid, then roll out the other three-quarters to a thickness of about 3mm.

Butter the pudding basin. Line it with the rolled-out pastry, leaving about 3cm (1in) of pastry hanging over the top. Set aside.

Now make the filling by rolling the beef and kidney in the seasoned flour. Mix the meat with the mushrooms and pile it all into the pastry-lined basin. Sprinkle with the Worcestershire, Tabasco and oyster sauces. Pour in enough beef stock or water to fill two-thirds (or slightly more) of the dish. Season the pudding with plenty of pepper. Roll out the remaining pastry to make a lid. Cover the pudding and fold the edges together to form a seal, pressing the edges of the pastry together lightly.

Cut a piece of foil large enough to cover the top of the pudding loosely: the pudding must have room to expand. Hold the foil in place by tying some string around it, just under the rim of the pudding basin. Make a handle by passing the string across the top loosely, two or three times and threading it under the rim-string (see illustration on page 45). Fasten it tightly at one side. Set the sealed pudding aside.

Fill a large pan with a tightly fitting lid with enough water to come two thirds of the way up the pudding basin. Bring the water to the boil and lower the pudding into the pan. Cover the large pan with a lid. (The first time I made the pudding I did not remember the lid or even dream that it was essential, silly idiot. After 4 hours the pudding was more or less raw). Add more boiling water as it evaporates; don't worry if the pudding leaks a bit. Continue topping up the boiling water as necessary for 4-5 hours.

Lift the pudding out of the pan and remove the foil. Wrap the basin in a white cloth or napkin with the crust showing, browned and slightly fluffy, over the top of the white linen collar. If the crust has come in contact with the water it will be pale and glistening but still excellent to eat. Serve the fragrant pudding with a big spoon.

Accompany with small plainly boiled potatoes and carrots or any vegetable mash and, if you like it, English mustard. I also like this with cabbage or purple sprouting broccoli.