

*October Recipe***Beef with Black Olives Pie**

Making this pie is a joy, as the smell of the Moroccan spices fill the house. If you like a bit of heat, add a teaspoon of harissa with the spices. It is also fabulous served with saffron mash.

SERVES 6

**FOR THE FILLING:**

2 tbsp olive oil
500g (1lb) chuck stewing or braising steak, cut into 4cm (1½ in) cubes
1 tbsp plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
A knob of butter
3 onions, sliced
6 cloves garlic, chopped
1 handful flat leaf parsley, chopped
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground ginger
1 cinnamon stick
400g (14oz) tinned plum tomatoes
150g (5oz) black olives, pitted
150ml (5fl oz) water
1 tbsp tomato puree

FOR THE PASTRY:

250g (9oz) self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ tsp salt
2 tsp turmeric powder
100g (3½ oz) butter, cubed
100ml (3½ floz) milk

First make the filling. Heat the oil in a large casserole on a high heat. Coat the meat in the seasoned flour and fry until browned all over. Remove the meat from the pan and set aside.

Reduce the heat and add the butter to the pan. Stir in the onions and gently stew for 10 minutes or until translucent. Keep checking and stirring to make sure the onions do not burn. Throw in the garlic, parsley and spices, and stir for a couple of minutes. Return the meat to the pan, then pour in the tomatoes, olives and water. Stir through the tomato puree. Mash up the tomatoes a bit with your spoon and scrape the bottom of the pan to keep it from sticking. Gently simmer for 2 hours - keep checking to make sure it does not burn or stick to the bottom of the pan and give it a gentle stir; add some more water if it starts to dry out.

While it is simmering, prepare the pastry. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Rub in the butter between your thumb and fingers until it looks like breadcrumbs. Add the milk a little at a time and combine until you have a soft dough. Depending on the type of flour you are using, you may need a little more or less milk than suggested. Roll the dough into a ball, cover it in cling film and pop it in the fridge until needed.

Preheat the oven to 220°C (425°F/Gas 7). Once the filling has finished simmering and is an aromatic tender stew, with a nice thick rich sauce, remove the cinnamon stick. Taste the filling and season it with salt and pepper accordingly. Pour the mixture into a medium pie dish.

Roll out the pastry to make a lid for the dish. Brush the edges of the dish with water so the lid will stick. Cover the dish, press down the edges and trim. Cut a small hole in the top to let the steam escape, and bake the pie for 20 minutes.

I like to serve with boiled sweet potatoes, tossed in butter and chopped fresh parsley.