



## Plantagenet Pie: Leicester 2012

Our workplace has a tradition of celebratory baking, and in the aftermath of the media fest surrounding the discovery of the skeleton of Richard III, I made this pie for the excavation digging team on the last day in the field. I hunted my wild boar on the net, though it is occasionally available in the local butcher. Wild boar is delicious but expensive; lamb or good quality stewing beef would make a good substitute, as long as it is lean. But on this occasion, no expense was spared! The pie is filling and will serve 10-12 people, but the ingredients can easily be downsized for a smaller pie. The vegetables, spices and wine are appropriate to a medieval dish.

### Ingredience

#### Shortcrust pastry:

125g/4 oz cold butter diced in small chunks	Good pinch of salt
250g/8oz plain white flour	2 tbsp cold water
	1 egg, lightly beaten to glaze

#### Pie filling:

1.5 k/3 lb wild boar, trimmed of any fat and gristle and cut into bite-sized pieces	1 tbsp grated fresh ginger, or 2 tsp powdered ginger
1 bottle of full-bodied red wine	2 tsp black peppercorns, ground
A large onion, finely chopped	1 whole nutmeg, grated
1/2 head of celery (the greener the better) cut into fine slices	2-3 ins/5-7.5 cm of stick cinnamon, broken into pieces
2 large carrots, cut into chunky short matchsticks	6-8 cloves
6-8 large cloves of garlic, finely chopped	2 bay leaves
	3 –4 tbsp finely chopped parsley
	salt
	plain flour
	olive oil for frying

To bake this you will need a pie dish or tin c. 10 -11 in/25-28 cm diam. and 2 in/5cm deep and a deep pan to prepare the filling.



### **To make the pastry:**

I make this in a food processor using the standard cutter, which does an excellent job in seconds. Put the flour in the processor bowl with the salt and add the butter in chunks, whizzing manually. When it is all in add the water carefully in a thin stream, until the pastry forms a solid lump. Dust your hands with flour, remove and place in a plastic bag or similar, to rest in the fridge for at least an hour – overnight will do no harm.

### **To make the pie filling:**

Shallow fry the onion and garlic in 1tbsp olive oil until soft and golden. Reserve.

Coat the wild boar pieces lightly in flour and then shallow fry in batches until brown. Return all of the meat to the deep pan.

Setting aside a glass as cook's perks, add the wine, onions, spices and bay leaves to the meat, and leave for 2 1/2-3 hours to simmer gently, or until the meat is very tender. Don't rush this stage.

Add the carrots and celery to the filling. Leave to simmer for a further 20 minutes.

I covered the pan for the first hour and then left the lid tilted to allow the sauce to reduce. You want to end up with a rich and slightly thickened sauce around the meat, rather than a soupy liquid with meaty bits. At this point add salt to taste, more pepper if you fancy it, and the parsley. You also need to retrieve the bay leaves, stick cinnamon and the cloves, if you can spot them.

### **To make the pie:**

Retrieve the pastry from the fridge to soften up slightly at room temperature. Heat your oven to 200 C, and roll out the pastry fairly thickly to fit the size of your pie dish. Put the filling in the dish and cover with the pastry, pressing against the dish edges and making a hole in the centre for steam to escape. Brush with beaten egg to glaze.

The pie should be ready in about 30 minutes – check that the pastry is not getting too brown and if necessary reduce the oven temperature.

For the occasion, I set aside a small piece of pastry to make a somewhat bowdlerised Plantagenet shield, which I baked separately. See photo!

Deirdre