

james martin steak and kidney pie

James Martin Steak and Kidney Pie is a classic British dish that embodies comfort and homeliness. Renowned chef James Martin has put his own spin on this traditional recipe, making it accessible to cooks of all skill levels. This dish combines tender pieces of steak and kidney with a rich, flavorful gravy, all encased in a flaky pastry crust. Not only is it delicious, but it also serves as a reminder of the culinary heritage of the UK, where pies have been a staple for centuries. In this article, we will delve into the history of steak and kidney pie, the ingredients required for James Martin's version, the step-by-step cooking process, and tips for perfecting this delicious dish.

History of Steak and Kidney Pie

Steak and kidney pie has a storied history that dates back to the 19th century. The dish is believed to have originated in England, where meat pies were a popular meal among the working class. The combination of steak and kidney became particularly favored, as both ingredients were relatively affordable and provided a hearty meal for families.

- 19th Century Origins: The first printed recipe for steak and kidney pie appeared in the 1860s, solidifying its place in British cuisine.
- Regional Variations: Over the years, numerous regional variations have emerged, with some incorporating ale or stout into the gravy, while others may use different cuts of meat.
- Cultural Significance: The pie has become synonymous with British comfort food, often served in pubs and homes alike, particularly during colder months.

Ingredients for James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie

To recreate James Martin's steak and kidney pie, you'll need a selection of quality ingredients. Here's a breakdown of what you'll need:

For the Filling

- Steak: 500g of diced beef (chuck or braising steak is ideal)
- Kidney: 250g of diced beef kidney (or lamb kidney)
- Onion: 1 large onion, finely chopped
- Garlic: 2 cloves, minced
- Carrots: 2 medium carrots, diced
- Flour: 2 tablespoons for dusting
- Beef Stock: 600ml
- Red Wine: 150ml (optional, but adds depth of flavor)
- Worcestershire Sauce: 2 tablespoons
- Thyme: Fresh thyme leaves, to taste
- Salt and Pepper: To taste
- Butter and Oil: For frying

For the Pastry

- Flour: 500g of plain flour
- Butter: 250g of unsalted butter, chilled and cubed
- Salt: 1 teaspoon
- Water: 6-8 tablespoons of cold water

Step-by-Step Cooking Process

Making James Martin's steak and kidney pie is a rewarding process that involves preparing the filling, making the pastry, and assembling the pie.

1. Prepare the Filling

- Sauté the Vegetables: In a large pan, heat a combination of butter and oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and minced garlic, sautéing until translucent. Add the diced carrots and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.
- Brown the Meat: Dust the diced steak and kidney in flour, seasoned with salt and pepper. In the same pan, increase the heat and add the meat, browning it on all sides. This step is crucial as it adds depth to the flavor of the pie.
- Add Liquids and Simmer: Once the meat is browned, pour in the red wine (if using) and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Allow the wine to simmer for a couple of minutes before adding the beef stock and Worcestershire sauce. Stir in the thyme and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and let it simmer for at least 1 hour, or until the meat is tender.

2. Make the Pastry

- Prepare the Dough: In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt. Add the chilled butter and rub it into the flour using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Gradually add cold water, mixing until the dough comes together.
- Chill the Pastry: Wrap the dough in cling film and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. This resting period helps to relax the gluten, resulting in a flakier pastry.

3. Assemble the Pie

- Preheat the Oven: Preheat your oven to 200°C (180°C fan) or 400°F.
- Roll Out the Pastry: Divide the pastry into two portions, one slightly larger than the other. Roll out the larger portion on a floured surface to fit your pie dish. Place the rolled pastry in the dish,

allowing the excess to hang over the edges.

- Fill the Pie: Once the filling has cooled slightly, pour it into the pastry-lined pie dish. Roll out the second portion of pastry and place it over the filling. Trim any excess pastry and crimp the edges to seal.
- Vent the Pie: Cut a few slits in the top of the pastry to allow steam to escape during baking.
- Egg Wash: Brush the top with beaten egg for a golden finish.

4. Bake the Pie

- Bake: Place the assembled pie in the preheated oven and bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and flaky.
- Serve: Allow the pie to cool slightly before serving. It pairs beautifully with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

Tips for Perfecting Your Steak and Kidney Pie

- Quality Ingredients: Use high-quality meat and fresh vegetables for the best flavor.
- Marinating: Consider marinating the meat in red wine overnight for enhanced flavor.
- Pastry Handling: Don't overwork the pastry; handle it gently to maintain its flakiness.
- Resting Time: Allow the filling to cool before adding it to the pastry to prevent a soggy bottom.

Conclusion

James Martin's steak and kidney pie is not just a dish; it is a culinary experience steeped in tradition and flavor. With its hearty filling and flaky crust, it captures the essence of British comfort food. Whether you are an experienced cook or a novice in the kitchen, this recipe provides an excellent opportunity to create a meal that is both satisfying and nostalgic. By following the outlined steps and tips, you can bring this beloved classic into your home, impressing family and friends with your culinary skills. Enjoy the process, and most importantly, relish every bite of this iconic dish!

Frequently Asked Questions

What is James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie recipe known for?

James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie is known for its rich, flavorful filling made from tender pieces of beef and kidney, encased in a flaky, golden pastry.

What ingredients are essential in James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

Essential ingredients include diced beef, kidney (usually lamb or beef), onions, beef stock, flour, butter, and shortcrust pastry.

How long does it take to prepare James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

Preparation typically takes about 30 minutes, but the cooking time can range from 1.5 to 2 hours to ensure the meat is tender.

Can I use other meats in James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

Yes, you can substitute the beef and kidney with other meats like chicken or pork, but the traditional recipe focuses on beef and kidney.

What side dishes pair well with James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

It pairs well with mashed potatoes, peas, or a simple green salad.

Is James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie suitable for freezing?

Yes, the pie can be frozen before or after baking, making it a convenient option for meal prep.

What type of pastry is used in James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

James Martin typically uses shortcrust pastry for the base and lid of the pie.

What is the best way to serve James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

It is best served hot, straight from the oven, often with a side of gravy.

Are there any vegetarian alternatives to James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie?

Yes, you can create a vegetarian version using mushrooms, lentils, and a variety of vegetables in place of the meat.

Where can I find James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie recipe?

James Martin's Steak and Kidney Pie recipe can be found on his official website, cookbooks, and various cooking shows.

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