

# Hand pies

Lady Morwenna O Hurlihie

Food wrapped in a crust is a lovely thing. The innards are all cooked, so they're easier to store for camping events. You can just grab one as you run from one activity to the next. Whenever there is a pot luck dayboard at an event, hand pies tend to disappear quickly. You can also make them ahead of time and freeze them to be baked when you need them.

Best of all, they're not that hard to make.

This class is focusing on meat hand pies.

## Pie Crust

I am told you can buy pie crust. My mom taught me how to make it, so for me, making it is easier. If you are afraid of pastry making, however, please buy crust.

### Basic Pie Dough

- About 2 cups of flour (You can mix white all purpose flour with other types, such as whole wheat, or use a gluten-free flour)
- About 1 tsp of salt
- ¼ lb (i.e. ½ cup) of a solid fat – lard, butter, margarine (or a combination)
- (If you're going gluten free, I recommend including an egg)
- Water (usually 1/3 to ½ cup, depends on humidity)

Blend fat, flour, and salt until crumbly. You can use your fingers if you have cold hands, two knives, a pastry cutter, or a food processor.

Drizzle in water and mix until you have a cohesive ball of dough.

Wrap in something air tight and toss into the fridge for at least an hour. It lasts days in the fridge, longer in the freezer.

Hot crust alternative: Melt fat in the water. (Watch carefully, boiling water and fat is deadly) Mix with flour until you have a cohesive ball of dough. Knead dough as soon as you can touch it with your hands. Do not let the dough rest or get cool before rolling out.

Note on gluten free: Part of what makes a pie crust work is gluten. Gluten free pie dough tends to be crumbly and not as flexible. I recommend using a pie plate (or muffin tin).

## Fillings

The possibilities are endless. My favorite period recipe is from Gode Cookery.

(<http://www.godecookery.com/goderec/grec11.htm>) While there are lots of words, it's basically "take meat, add some fillers/flavors, and season to taste."

## Preparing meats

Whenever possible, cook down meat from bones. It tastes better.

For hooved creatures, brown the outside of the meat. You will need to argue with your smoke detector a lot. After the meat is browned, cover with water.

For poultry, you can skip the browning step.

Add aromatic vegetables (onions, carrots, celery), maybe a bay leaf (thyme and parsley for poultry), and simmer for an hour or three.

Let cool. Skim off the fat. Remove the meat from the bones, shredding the meat into a new pot.

Strain the broth/stock over the shredded meat into the new pot. Reheat, and let boil for at least 20 minutes.

Congratulations, you now have meat and stock. Use most of the meat for pie fillings, use the broth for soups. Freeze whatever you don't use today.

Whole cut up chickens are lovely. 7-bone chuck steak/roast is perfect for beef. Pork shoulder or bone-in country ribs are great for pork. (Pork with onion and a can of beer in a crock pot does wonders, too.)

Watch for sales and prep this for later. Reaching into your freezer for a container to make a pie or a soup is fabulous.

## Preparing fillings

Sauté aromatics – onion, garlic, mushrooms, curry spices.

Add meat with some liquid. (If using ground meat, omit liquid at this time, you want to brown the meat a smidge)

If including veggies or fruits that need to cook (carrots, celery, raisins, potato, turnip, etc.), add now. You may need to add more liquid to cook the veggies in. Can be broth, wine, beer, water.

Season to taste with spices.

Keep your filling moist. Powdered gravy mixes are a lovely cheat. While you can just add water, flavored liquid is better: stock, water & a bouillon cube, wine, etc.

If possible, let cool a bit before assembling. (Don't ask how many times I've put hot filling into pie dough late at night before an event...it's better if your filling is cooler.)

## Assembling Pies

On a floured board, roll out your pie dough to desired thickness. I aim for about 1/8" thick.

Cut into rounds about 6" in diameter.

Place on to a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper or a silpat (silicone no-stick baking sheet).

Add 1/8 -1/4 cup of filling on one side of the circle.

Fold over pastry and press edges together. You may need to moisten the edges to get them to stick properly. If you're being fancy, press with a fork, or roll edges.

If freezing, cover tightly and stick in the freezer. After an hour or so, remove, and repack into a smaller container, again wrapping tightly.

If cooking, you can glaze with an egg beaten with water. Not required, but can make it look pretty. (You can also take dough scraps and cut out shapes to add for decoration.) You may also want to cut vent/steam holes

Bake in oven at 350° until crust is golden. Remember, everything except the crust is cooked.

Let cool on a rack, or serve warm.

## Today's Guidelines

I can't call these recipes because I'm still going to play it by ear. If you want exactly what we make today...take notes.

### Beef, mushroom, and onion

- Ground beef (not period, but easily obtainable)
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Spices: Poudre Forte, Pepper, Salt, Cinnamon
- Wine

### Chicken with raisins and almonds

- Cooked chicken
- Raisins
- Slivered almonds
- Spices: Poudre Forte, Pepper, Salt

### Lentil and mushroom

- Brown lentils
- Mushrooms
- Carrots
- Celery
- Onion
- Garlic
- Bouillon cube/Vegetable broth
- Spices: An Herb Mixture, Pepper, Salt