



CHICKEN POT PIE



You can, of course, make a pie crust (not sweet) for top and bottom pot pie, or you can purchase a refrigerated or frozen pie crust, or there are some boxed pie crust mixes on the grocery shelves. I've used them all.

You can also use canned biscuits as a topping only, or make your own baking powder biscuits for topping, or buy frozen biscuits to use as the topping.

Depending on how many you want to serve, use a pie plate, small individual "casserole" dishes, rectangle, oval, or square pans. Often my family would ask for enough for 2 meals so if I was planning for 4 using a 9" square pan, for 2 meals for 4 I'd use a 9"x13" pan at least.

FOR THE FILLING:

Ingredients

I generally like to use left over protein. From a rotisserie chicken or left-over fried chicken – but use only the tender cooked meat, not the skin or crust. You can also use some chicken pieces and boil with celery, onion, carrots, salt and pepper until tender and cooled. Remove from bones. If using meat, use enough to make it tasty.

I always used left over turkey at Thanksgiving or holidays.

You can use left-over ham – just change the vegetables and seasonings to fit the ham, especially if the ham had a sweet glaze.

Roast beef is excellent, using leftovers. If you don't have enough from one roast, freeze the pieces until you have enough for a pot pie. Same with pork.

For vegetarian pot pie, make your vegetables bite sized and complimentary. You could use tofu after the vegetables are cooked. You would want the tofu to remain in bite sized pieces.

You'll need vegetables like celery, onion, carrot, sweet peppers (green, red, yellow, orange), potato, Sweet potato, peas, corn, butter beans, maybe tomato with the beef. If you use spinach or greens, you'd not want the liquid. Perhaps mushrooms. Whatever you enjoy.

You'll need left over gravy (like from roasted turkey, chicken, or roast beef, etc.), and/or broth – meat or vegetable.

You'll probably need corn starch to thicken. At big dinners I like to use left over mashed potatoes as part of the thickener along with the leftover gravy.

Just be prepared before you start. If making several or very large ones allow time to make and bake, as well as time for baking in separate times. Or make, refrigerate, or freeze, and bake just before serving.

I enjoy salt, pepper, garlic powder/salt, poultry seasoning if using poultry like chicken or turkey. Parsley, and any herbs you enjoy. Whatever you used to cook the protein originally, I'd use in the pot pie – thyme, oregano, rosemary. I'd be careful using spices for the ham because it might be too strong. What is cooked into the ham would be more than enough. But you could use spices for curries in some.

You can use canned, drained butter beans if using. Or frozen corn and/or peas/peas and carrots, mixed vegetables.

Everything in the filling should be about the same size for easier eating. I make sure everything is cooked before making the filling (using the cooked ingredients).

Instructions

1. If ingredients are raw, be sure to cook first. Then combine. Add the gravy/broth until you feel it is enough for the pans you are using and the amount you want to end up with.
2. To thicken more than with the gravy and/or mashed potatoes left over, mix corn starch and water into a "slurry" and when the filling is hot, add slowly stirring constantly until thickened. Remember - you are baking this, and it needs to be dished out or cut into pieces for serving. Make it thick. If too thin, you could add instant mashed potatoes as a thickener. (I'm a butter granny remember, so if it's a little thick when serving, add pats of butter!)
3. Be sure to taste and adjust seasonings. If using beef and with a few tomatoes, maybe add a little chili spice.
4. Preheat your oven for your pot pies. 375 deg F – you might want to place your pan of pie on a cookie sheet or foil, it just might overflow when it gets hot and bubbly. And trust me! It's a mess to clean up even with a self-cleaning oven.
5. Bake until you smell it, and it is nice and browned. The filling is cooked remember. It's the crust you're trying to bake. If you only add crust or biscuit on top, then it is just the top you need to bake until browned. If you use glass oven safe pans you can see when the bottom is browned.

I serve with fruit salads or pickled beets, or cucumbers, or corn salad. Something with a little different texture and I prefer cold salads as a variety. I think you'll find this fun to make and fun to serve and eat. We can tackle sweet pies another day. HAVE FUN AND ENJOY!

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