

## Mushroom & Braised Beef Pot Pie

Serve in 10 oz. (makes 4) or 6 oz. (makes 6-8) ramekins.

- 1 – 1½ lb. beef (chuck, boneless shortribs or stew beef), cut into ½-inch chunks
- Salt
- Pepper
- Flour
- Olive oil
- 4-6 garlic cloves, rough chopped
- 1 large shallot, diced
- ½ medium onion, diced
- 1 lb. mushrooms (an assortment is nice), chopped into large pieces/chunks
- Approx. 2 cups mushroom and/or beef stock
- Approx. 1 cup red wine
- Fresh thyme, about 1-2 tablespoons
- 2 sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed according to box instructions
- 1 egg
- Optional: 1-2 tablespoons beef demi-glace

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Make sure to adjust the racks so there's room for a Dutch oven to fit.

Season the beef with salt and pepper and lightly coat with flour. (I like to put a half-cup or so of flour in a veggie bag and shake the beef.) Heat oil in a Dutch oven on medium-high heat on the stovetop. Sear the beef in batches—don't overcrowd the pot—on all sides until crusty and brown and set aside. Add more oil if needed.

Add garlic, shallots and onion to the pot and brown. Deglaze pot with a little broth. Add mushrooms; cook until they begin to soften. Add beef (and any beef liquid that may have dripped out) to the pot, along with stock and wine—enough to just about cover the beef and vegetables.

If using, add a tablespoon of beef demi-glace and stir in. Sprinkle thyme, reserving a couple teaspoons for garnish later, and mix everything together. Cover and transfer to oven.

Every 45 minutes or so, check to make sure the liquid hasn't reduced too much. Lower the temp if the liquid is boiling. Add more wine or stock if needed. After an hour and a half, if you would like a beefier flavor, add another tablespoon of demi-glace. Simmer until beef is tender, about 3-4 hours. Remove from oven and raise oven temp to 400°.

Cut puff pastry to cover ramekins—make sure to cut pieces large enough to overhang the edge; I simply cut large squares—and whisk egg in a small bowl.

Ladle beef and mushroom mixture into ramekins—about ¾ full—and cover with puff pastry. Brush with egg—this will make the tops nice and shiny golden-brown. Cut a few slits in the top to vent. Bake for about 15-20 minutes, until golden and puffy. Garnish with a sprinkle of fresh thyme leaves before serving.