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Brisket & Mushroom Pie . . with 'Belfast Black' Dry Stout

Serves 7-8

- 3kg/6lb Brisket, trimmed & cubed*
- 4 large onions, peeled & chopped*
- 2 sticks celery, chopped, ½small turnip, peeled & diced*
- 1 leek (mostly white part) sliced*
- 350g/12oz chestnut mushrooms, quartered*
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled & chopped*
- 1x500ml Belfast Black dry stout*
- 4 tbsp smoky chipotle chilli ketchup*
- 3 tbsp Worcester sauce*
- 500ml/1pt chicken or vegetable stock*
- 1 level tbsp brown sugar*
- 3 piled tbsp plain flour, seasoned with blk pepper & salt*
- 3 thyme sprigs, 3 bay leaves*
- 6 tbsp rapeseed oil or duck fat*
- 1x 375g sheet puff pastry.*

Put the seasoned flour into a large plastic bag with the brisket and toss until each piece is covered with flour, you may have to do this in two stages. Put a third of the oil or duck fat into a large heavy base fry pan, heat until smoking and then add a third of the beef. Brown on both sides and transfer to a large casserole. Brown the remaining beef the same way in two stages and also transfer to the casserole. Add two more tbsp of oil to the fry pan and sauté the onions for a few minutes before adding the mushrooms, celery, turnip and garlic. Toss until all the vegetables are covered in oil. Again you may have to do this in two stages and transfer to the casserole.

Pour the chicken or vegetable stock in to the same fry pan and add the Worcester sauce, chipotle ketchup, brown sugar, thyme sprigs and bay leaves. Bring to the boil, bubble for a few minutes and then pour into the casserole. Pour over the "Belfast Black" Stout and stir well to mix the vegetable through the meat. At this stage the casserole can be left for a few hours (or overnight) for all the ingredients to marinate.

When ready to cook, bring to the boil and if using a four oven Aga, cook in the plate warming oven overnight for 9-10 hours ! Remove from oven and transfer half of the beef to a 1.6lt/3pt pie dish, cool and freeze the remaining meat for another pie or just to serve on another occasion with creamed mashed potato !

If cooking in a conventional oven, pre heat to 150C/Gas mk4/Aga simmering oven for 3-4 hours. Cook with a lid on until the meat is really tender.

To make the Pie to serve 7-8 people : Remove the sprigs of thyme and bay leaves. Unroll the puff pastry and cut out the size of your pie dish. Brush the edges of the dish with beaten egg and using leftover pastry, cut into strips to fit around the lip of the pie dish. Press on firmly and when in place, brush with beaten egg and place the previously cut out lid on top and brush with beaten egg. If you have a pie funnel, make a hole in the centre of the pastry for it to sit into . . . if not, put a couple of slits in the top of the pastry.

Cook in a pre heated oven for 40-45 minutes at 200C/Gas Mk6/Aga roasting oven, until pastry is nicely browned and the meat heated through . . . Serve with green vegetables and mashed potato !