





# PUFF PASTRY-TOPPED MUSHROOM POT PIE

Puff pastry, which can be found in the freezer section of most grocery stores, is the simplest and, arguably, most impressive-looking way to top a pot pie. It's delicious and fun to eat. Here we've paired it with a luxurious mushroom stew—an elevated cream of mushroom soup that evokes a dish you'd have at a fancy French restaurant! The sweetness of leeks and fennel balances the woodiness of the mushrooms, and the spinach adds extra depth and color. The base is incredibly versatile, so feel free to experiment with the vegetables, as well as the mushroom varieties.

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**Makes 4 to 6 individual pot pies**

**For a gluten-free version, use GF flour and puff pastry; for a vegetarian version, use vegetable or mushroom stock**

**Equipment : 4 to 6 oven-safe bowls or large individual ramekins**

## INGREDIENTS

Olive oil, a few tablespoons

**Leeks**, 2 large, white and light green parts only, cleaned and sliced

**Fennel bulb**, 1, stems and fronds removed, cleaned and finely diced

Salt

**Assorted mushrooms**, 2 pounds, cleaned and torn or cut into bite-size pieces (maitake, shiitake, king trumpet, shimeji [beechnut], or any of the extra-special varieties, such as chanterelles, black trumpets, or morels)

**Butter**, 2 tablespoons

**All-purpose flour**, 2 tablespoons, plus more for dusting

**Chicken stock**, 4 cups (preferably homemade, see page 40), warmed

Puff pastry, one-half box (store-bought, frozen, preferably all-butter; see Variations), thawed

**Heavy cream**,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup

**Fresh parsley**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  bunch, washed, leaves picked and chopped

**Fresh thyme leaves**, 1 tablespoon chopped

**Black pepper**

**Spinach**, 2 cups baby or 1 bunch regular, washed

**Egg wash**, made by mixing 1 raw egg with 1 tablespoon of water, for brushing

## Variations

The stew would be delicious on its own, over a nice crusty piece of toast, or even served over pasta or rice. If you want to take the velvety stew in a different direction, you can substitute or add in countless vegetables, including peas, snap peas, carrots, celery root, parsnips, and more.

## Tip

**Cleaning mushrooms varies by variety.** Cultivated mushrooms like shiitake, king trumpet, shimeji (beech), and maitake—or the more common button, cremini, and portabellas—don't usually need to be rinsed. They can just get a close inspection and a light brushing, if necessary. Wild mushrooms like chanterelles, black trumpets, and morels, on the other hand, need to be rinsed in a few changes of water to loosen and remove dirt from their natural habitat.

**1 Cook the vegetables and mushrooms:** Preheat the oven to 400°F. Heat a hearty drizzle of olive oil in a wide-bottomed pot over medium heat. Put the leeks and fennel into the pot with a good pinch of salt and sauté until tender, about 8 minutes; avoid browning. Remove to a plate. Drizzle a little more olive oil into the pot and add one-third of the mushrooms with a pinch of salt. Sauté until tender and lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Transfer to the plate of sautéed vegetables and repeat twice more with the remaining mushrooms.

**2 Make a roux:** Add the butter to the same pot. When melted, add the flour and whisk until the mixture is just starting to turn golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the warmed stock in small ladlefuls, whisking in between each addition. When all the stock is added, taste the stew base and season lightly with salt, erring on the side of slightly less rather than slightly more. (The liquid will reduce and the flavors will concentrate as it cooks.) Simmer over medium heat for 7 to 12 minutes, until it is rich, velvety, and smooth. (Richer, more flavorful stocks need less time to concentrate, whereas lighter stocks need more time.)

**3 Prep the puff pastry:** Lightly dust a work surface with flour, then roll out the puff pastry with a rolling pin to a ¼-inch thickness. Using a sharp knife, cut it into squares a bit larger than the oven-safe bowls or ramekins you plan to use for the pot pies. Set aside.

**4 Finish the stew:** Add the sautéed vegetables to the thickened stew base. Add the cream, parsley, and thyme, bring to a simmer, and taste for seasoning, adding more herbs and salt, along with black pepper, as necessary to boost the flavor. Stir in the spinach, and taste and adjust the seasoning again. Turn off the heat. Place the oven-safe bowls or ramekins onto a baking sheet. Then, ladle in the stew, filling them ½ to ¾ inch from the rim.

**5 Top the pot pies:** With the puff pastry still lying flat, paint each square lightly with egg wash, avoiding the very edges. Then place the squares, egg-wash-side down, on top of each bowl. Gently pull the edges taut, so the pastry doesn't lie directly on the stew. Gently press the edges of the pastry to the bowl and gently brush the tops with egg wash. (Gentle business, this puff pastry work!)

**6 Bake and serve:** Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until puffed and golden brown.

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# (SERIOUS) NEW COOK



RECIPES, TIPS & TECHNIQUES

FOREWORD BY CAL PETERNELL

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