

## Pennsylvania-Dutch Chicken Pie

### For the Stock

1 whole large chicken  
1 quart chicken broth  
1 carrot  
1 celery stalk, plus leaves  
1 onion  
1 leek  
2 bay leaves  
6 thyme sprigs  
4 rosemary sprigs  
8 parsley sprigs  
6 peppercorns  
1 tablespoon salt

### For the Sauce

6 cups chicken stock  
½ cup flour  
2 egg yolks  
6 tablespoons butter or 3 tablespoons butter plus 3 tablespoons rendered chicken fat  
1 cup heavy cream  
Salt and pepper to taste

### To Stew the Chicken

Place the chicken in a very large pot, and pour the chicken stock over it. Add cold water to cover the bird. This could mean as many 10-12 cups of water. Turn the heat on to low. As scum rises to the top, skim it off with a large spoon. This is much easier to do before the vegetables are added.

In the meanwhile, begin preparing the vegetables. Quarter the onion and slice the carrot and celery stalk. When you are finished skimming, add all the vegetables, herbs, and salt and peppercorns to the stewing chicken. Partially cover the pot, and adjust the heat to maintain a slow simmer. You don't want the liquid to come to a boil, which incorporates the the fat into the broth. Continue to simmer for 4-5 hours. When done remove the chicken, and strain the liquid into a large pot, pressing down on the vegetables and herbs to extract as much flavor as possible. Discard the vegetables and herbs because they've become mushy and have rendered all their flavors.

Place the broth in the refrigerator to allow the fat to rise. Remove all the meat from the chicken and discard the bones and the skin. Break the chicken meat into bite-sized pieces. Cover the chicken and refrigerate until ready to make the pie. This process is best done the day before you intend to make the dish.

### For the Pie

The meat from the chicken  
3 carrots  
3 celery stalks  
2 leeks  
½ cup minced parsley  
4 cups chicken sauce

### For the Buttermilk Biscuits

3 cups flour  
1½ teaspoons salt  
¾ teaspoons baking powder  
1½ teaspoons sugar  
¼ teaspoons baking soda  
4 tablespoons lard or Crisco  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1⅓ to 1½ cups buttermilk

When you're ready to make the pie, remove the chicken and the broth from the refrigerator, and spoon off the fat from the broth. You can either discard it or save it as part of the fat for making the sauce, which will give you a deeper flavor.

### **To Prepare the Vegetables**

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. The vegetables should be cooked separately, but in the same pot of boiling water, so that each is cooked to the right doneness. You want them to be just tender, but not mushy. Remember they will cook again in the oven. Dice the carrots, the celery, and slice the leeks. The potatoes should be sliced just slightly thicker than  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch.

Place the carrots in the boiling water and cook just until barely tender. Remove them to a bowl with a skimmer, keeping the water boiling. Do the same with the celery, the leeks and the potatoes. Mince  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of parsley and set aside.

### **To Make the Sauce**

Bring the stock to a boil and boil for about 5-10 minutes to concentrate the flavor. You should have more than 6 cups of broth. If you've saved the rendered chicken fat, combine 3 tablespoons of it with 3 tablespoons of butter. Otherwise, use 6 tablespoons of butter. Heat it in a large, heavy pot until it is frothy. Do not let it brown. Whisk in the flour and cook for a few minutes.

Add 6 cups of boiling chicken stock to the flour/butter mixture and whisk until smooth. In a small bowl, beat the two egg yolks. Slowly dribble in about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the sauce into the yolks to gently warm them. Whisk thoroughly, then return the egg yolk mixture into the sauce, and simmer gently. You don't want the eggs to scramble. Beat in the cup of heavy cream. Add salt and pepper to taste, and keep warm.

### **Assembling the Pie**

In a 9- x 13-inch baking pan, spread a thin layer of the sauce. Mix together the cooked chicken meat, the vegetables, and the minced parsley, placing them on the layer of sauce. Pour about 4 cups of the sauce over the chicken and vegetable, gently mixing it in.

### **To Make the Buttermilk Biscuits**

Make certain that the buttermilk is at room temperature. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and sugar. Cut in the butter and lard (or Crisco) with a pastry blender until coarse crumbs are formed. Pour in the buttermilk and mix using a large wooden spoon with a few quick strokes until just combined. Remove the dough to a lightly floured board and knead for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  minute. Pat or roll out the dough to a thickness of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Cut with a biscuit cutter, and place the biscuits on top of the chicken mixture.

### **Baking and Serving**

Place a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat the oven to 450°. Place the pie in the oven and bake about 20-25 minutes until the biscuits are lightly brown on top. Serve slices of the pie, moistening with some of the remaining 2 cups of sauce.