

Deconstructed Tarragon Chicken Pot Pie (not a Pie - no crust)



Marinate the Chicken - Done ahead

I use skin on, bone in chicken. It is moist, and you get much more flavor. With the breasts, I cut off the back rib portion of the bone because it takes up valuable real estate in the pan with limited additional benefit. By doing so, the chicken meat comes off the bone much easier once cooked.

Ingredients

- 8 chicken breasts with skin & bone with back rib trimmed off
- 4 chicken thighs with skin & bone
- 2 - .75 ounce packets of fresh tarragon, hard stems removed and chopped
- 1 - .75 ounce packet fresh thyme, leaves removed from hard stems
- Juice & zest of 2 lemons
- 1 cup premium (baking quality) olive oil

Preparation

In a large bowl that will hold all that chicken whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest and chopped tarragon. Add in the chicken pieces and toss so that all the chicken pieces are coated in the marinade. In a 2-gallon plastic bag place the chicken and then squeeze out as much air you possibly can and seal. Refrigerate for at least two hours or up to 24 hours.



Make the Vegetables in Tarragon Cream Sauce - Can be done ahead

Ingredients

5 tablespoons unsalted butter
6 large carrots, chop into bite-sized pieces
1 entire celery heart, chopped into bite-sized pieces
2 leeks, thinly sliced leeks, just white portion and the tender, light green portion
1 shallot, sliced
1 container Bella mushrooms, cleaned and cut the larger mushrooms into bite-sized pieces (Bella's are small portabella mushrooms)
1 .75 ounce packet of fresh tarragon, leaves removed from stems, rough chopped
2 cups frozen green peas, thawed under warm water and drained
1/4 cup all-purpose flour or gluten-free flour
2 14.5 oz. cans low sodium chicken broth
3 cups heavy cream
1 teaspoon salt

Preparation

The Vegetables

Melt three tablespoons of butter in a large cast iron skillet. Toss in the chopped carrots and sauté until about half way done. (pull one out of the pan and bite into it.) At this point add chopped celery and continue cooking until they begin to soften. Add in leeks and shallots and continue cooking until translucent, then add in mushrooms and continue cooking until carrots are cooked (I like mine with an al dente bite). You may cover with lid or foil if desired. Do not let vegetables brown or burn. When the vegetables are cooked, add in peas and fresh tarragon. Remove from heat and set aside.

The Cream Sauce



In a Dutch oven melt the remaining two tablespoons of butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour, and cook, whisking, until the mixture bubbles and smells cooked. Do not let it brown. Whisk in 2 can of broth, and cook, whisking, 1-2 minutes until it begins to thicken. Whisk in cream one cup at a time and allow to thicken before you add the next cup. Once all three cups have been added, and it is thickened. Stir in salt. It is better if this sauce is a tad thick because the water in the vegetables will thin it a bit.

Using a slotted spoon, carefully fold in the vegetable medley into the sauce. If at this point the sauce is too thick, whisk in additional cream or broth whichever you prefer. Keep warm on the stove top. If you made the vegetables and sauce much earlier which you certainly can, then just reheat prior to service.



One hour before guests arrive - Make the Risotto

Ingredients

3 cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
2 bay leaves (Spice Islands are the most flavorful)
1 cup dry white wine
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2-1/4 cups arborio rice
1/2 teaspoon salt
Preparation

Bring broth and bay leaves to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat, so the broth remains steaming but is not simmering.

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Toss in chopped onion and cook, occasionally stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add rice and salt and stir to coat. Do not brown the rice, but it should start to crackle and take on a nutty aroma.



Stir a scant full ladle of the hot broth and a splash of wine into the rice. Cook, stirring frequently until the liquid has been absorbed. Continue to cook on medium-low, adding broth in 1 scant full ladle at a time followed by a splash of wine, and stir after each addition, until most of the liquid is absorbed. The risotto is done when you've used all the broth and wine, and the rice is creamy and just tender, 25 to 35 minutes total.

Remove from the heat.

About the Risotto

The rice will continue to absorb liquid as it sits. There is no way that I could make this and have it ready at the time of service, so it sat on the stove until dinner was to be served. Just before service, I stirred in some warm heavy cream (you could use more broth) to give it that creamy and silky texture that you want in a risotto.

When the Guests Arrive - Bake the Chicken



Heat oven to 450 degrees. Place chicken pieces in a roasting pan or cast iron skillet, skin side up. Continue to roast until the skin is crisp and golden. This will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. (internal temp at thickest part of breast and thigh is 165 degrees) You may wish to cook the thighs separate from the breasts because they do cook faster by about 15 minutes. If you do this check the thighs at 35 minutes. If they are done before the breasts, cover and set aside.

The chicken roasted while we enjoyed some wine and the appetizers for about 45 minutes to an hour.

Now Pull it All Together

Be sure to check risotto and make sure it did not dry out (see above). Make sure the Vegetables in Tarragon Cream Sauce is warmed up. Once the chicken was properly cooked, I created a service station on the kitchen counter so each guest could make their own plate.

