

WARMING RECIPES

for a Cozy Night at Home

Boeuf Bourguignon Pot Pie

Warm Chocolate Cakes | Homemade Hot
Chocolate with Vanilla Marshmallows

STORY, RECIPES, AND PHOTOS BY KAITLIN HILL

Arguably, the best part of winter is the warming food. From stews simmering on stoves all day perfuming the house with savory scents to fresh-from-the-oven desserts that are as cozy as they are decadent, chilly evenings are the perfect opportunity for comfort food. However, comfort doesn't have to mean casual. My recipes for Boeuf Bourguignon Pot Pie with a Pepper Flecked Crust, Warm Chocolate Cakes, and Homemade Hot Chocolate with Vanilla Marshmallows are as elegant as they come, but deceptively easy to make. With a few flourishes and a little work ahead, these three recipes are perfect for a special night at home. You might even mark Valentine's Day with these deeply decadent dishes, especially if you have a chocolate lover in your midst. Though, they don't require an occasion to be enjoyed.

Boeuf Bourguignon Pot Pie

Serves 4 – 6

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon of all-purpose flour (divided)
- 1 pound of boneless beef chuck, cut into one-inch pieces
- 3 slices of bacon, roughly chopped
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 leek, white and pale green parts, thinly sliced
- 1 carrot, sliced into circles
- 2 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 cup of red wine
- 2 tablespoons of bourbon
- 2 cups of beef broth
- ½ cup of parsley
- 4 sprigs of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 star anise pod
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 egg beaten with a tablespoon of water
- 8 ounces baby portabella mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- 5 ounces of pearl onions, peeled (I used frozen)
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 store-bought package (two rolls of dough) refrigerated pie dough or puff pastry dough

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. To make the Boeuf Bourguignon filling, season the ½ cup of flour with 1 teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of black pepper. Place the beef chuck cubes in a large bowl and top with the seasoned flour. Toss to combine.
3. Heat the 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large Dutch oven set over medium heat. Working in batches, fry the beef cubes for 3 – 4 minutes per side until browned. Transfer all of the browned meat to a bowl and set aside.
4. Next, add the chopped bacon to the pan and cook for 4 – 5 minutes until browned and crisp.
5. Add the onion, leek, and carrot and cook for 5 – 7 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Add the red wine and, using a wooden spoon, scrape up the brown bits from the bottom of the pan. Follow with the bourbon, beef broth, parsley, thyme, bay leaf, and star anise pod.
7. Bring the liquid to a boil and then reduce to a simmer.
8. In a small bowl, mix the remaining tablespoon of flour with a tablespoon of butter until a paste forms. Whisk the paste into the simmering broth and cook for 2 – 3 minutes until the paste has dissolved.
9. Cover the pot, turn off the heat, and carefully transfer the pot to the preheated oven. Bake for 1 hour.
10. After the meat has cooked for an hour, carefully remove it from the oven. Stir in the mushrooms and the pearl onions. Return the pot to the oven and cook for an additional 30 minutes until the meat is fork-tender.
11. Remove the meat from the oven and let cool to room temperature.
12. On a generously floured surface, roll each disc of pie dough into a circle an inch larger than a 10-inch pie plate. Press the bottom crust dough into the pie plate, leaving the overhang untouched.
13. Fill the bottom dough with the cooled meat filling, pressing it down to create a flat surface.
14. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg and 1 tablespoon of water to make an egg wash. Brush that egg wash around the rim of the bottom crust.
15. Top the filling with the second pie dough, rolled to size. Trim the edge to neaten it up and then crimp the top and bottom together.
16. Using a sharp knife, cut slits in the center of the pie to release steam while baking.
17. Brush the entire pie with egg wash, and transfer it to the oven. Bake for 35 – 40 minutes until golden brown.
18. When the crust is evenly browned, remove it from the oven and let cool slightly before slicing and serving.

Warm Chocolate Cakes

Serves 6

Ingredients

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. instant espresso powder
- 4 eggs
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour

Cake batter can be made a day in advance, poured into the prepared ramekins, and left in the fridge until baking and serving.

Directions

1. Butter six 4-ounce ramekins and line the bottoms with parchment. Grease the parchment with butter. Set aside.
2. Fill a small pot with a few inches of water and set over medium heat on the stove. Bring the water to a simmer. Place the butter, chocolate, salt, and espresso powder in a heatproof bowl and set it over the pot of water. Stir with a spatula to combine and cook until the butter and chocolate are completely melted together. Set aside to cool slightly.
3. Using a hand or stand mixer, beat together the eggs and sugar for 5 – 7 minutes at medium-high speed until the mixture is pale and thick. When lifted with a spoon the mixture should fall back on itself in ribbons.
4. Mix in the flour.
5. Using a spatula, fold in the chocolate mixture, being careful to not deflate the eggs. Fold until just combined and there are no stray streaks of chocolate or egg.
6. Spoon the mixture into the prepared ramekins nearly to the top, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch gap at the top.
7. Place the filled ramekins in the fridge and chill for at least 1 hour.
8. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the ramekins in the preheated oven and bake for 15 – 17 minutes. The cakes should still look a bit gooey in the very center and have a slight wobble to them. Watch carefully—it's easy to overbake and your center won't be as gooey.
9. Let the cakes rest for 5 minutes until turning out onto serving plates. If the cakes are reluctant to release, carefully run a butter knife around the edge to help them out. Serve immediately.

Homemade Hot Chocolate

Serves 2 – 4

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup of water
- 1/4 cup of unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 cups of whole milk
- 1 1/2 cups of heavy cream
- 6 ounces of bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 3 teaspoons of granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon of kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

Directions

1. Set a large pot over medium-high flame and fill with 1/3 cup of water. Bring the water to a boil and whisk in the cocoa powder. Whisk for 1 – 2 minutes until the chocolate and water become a paste.
2. Whisk in the milk and heavy cream, breaking up any chocolate paste clumps that may have formed. Bring the milk to a simmer and add the chopped chocolate, sugar, salt, and vanilla extract.
3. Whisk until the chocolate is melted and the hot chocolate is thick and creamy.
4. Serve immediately, topped with plenty of marshmallows!

Homemade Vanilla Marshmallows

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 packets of powdered gelatin
- 1/2 cup of room temperature water (divided)
- 3/4 cup of sugar
- 1/2 cup of light corn syrup
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- confectioners' sugar

Directions

1. Generously dust a 9x9-inch non-metal pan with confectioners' sugar. Set aside.
2. To make the marshmallows, place the gelatin and 1/4 a cup of water into a large bowl and set aside to soften.
3. In a small pot, add the remaining 1/4 cup of water, the sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Turn the flame on medium-high heat and cook until the sugar is dissolved, stirring occasionally. Continue to cook for 5 – 8 minutes until the syrup reaches 240°F.
4. Using a hand or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, carefully whisk the syrup into the gelatin on low speed. When all the gelatin is incorporated, turn the speed to high and beat the mixture until it is thick and opaque, 8 – 10 minutes.
5. Pour the marshmallows into the prepared pan and dust the top with more confectioners' sugar.
6. Leave at room temperature, uncovered, overnight for the marshmallows to solidify.
7. The next morning, gently remove the marshmallow from the pan and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into 1-inch squares. Marshmallows can be stored in an airtight container, at room temperature for up to two weeks.