



Bobotie

Bobotie is a well known and loved South African dish consisting of spiced minced meat baked with an egg-based topping. The dish has been known in the Cape of Good Hope since the 17th century, when it was made with a mixture of mutton and pork. Today, bobotie is much more likely to be made with beef mince.

Apparently the first recipe for bobotie appeared in a Dutch cookbook in 1609. Afterwards, it was taken to South Africa and adopted by the Cape Malay community. The Afrikaans etymological dictionary claims that the probable origin of the word bobotie is the Malayan word boemboe, meaning curry spices.

Serves 6-8



Photo by Dawie van Niekerk ©

Ingredients

2 onions finely diced
2 Tbs ghee/oil for frying
1 ½ cup milk
2 slices white bread (crusts removed)
½ tsp ground cloves
½ tsp ground nutmeg
1 tsp ground turmeric
2 Tbs curry powder
1 small knob fresh ginger minced
3 garlic cloves minced
1 tsp dried mixed herbs
1 kg lean beef mince
1 Tbs brown vinegar
3 Tbs apricot jam or chutney
1Tbs Worcestershire sauce
¼ cup chopped dried apricots (optional)
¼ cup chopped flaked almonds (optional)
1 egg
½ tsp ground turmeric
2 eggs
6-8 Bay leaves/lemon leaves

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Tear the bread in smaller pieces and soak in the milk.
2. Heat ghee or oil and fry onions until soft and translucent, stirring regularly.
3. Add the dry spices and fry for 1 minute to allow the flavours to develop. Add the garlic, ginger, herbs and mince to the pan. Mix well. Fry over low heat, stirring frequently, crushing the mince into fine grains until it changes colour. Season to taste. Remove from the heat.
4. Squeeze the milk from bread and save the milk for later. Add the bread, vinegar and jam/chutney to the meat mixture. Beat 1 egg and stir into mixture. Add apricots and almonds (if using) and mix well.
5. Transfer to an ovenproof dish and press the mixture down well and smooth the top. This helps keep the egg mixture afloat to allow a delicious thick custardy layer to form on top when baked. (You can make this and chill 1 day ahead).
6. For the topping: mix ½ tsp turmeric, 2 eggs and the saved milk from earlier. Season with salt and pepper (and a teaspoon dried mixed herbs if preferred).
7. Insert the bay/lemon leaves into the meat. Pour the egg mixture over the meat. Place the dish in another pan containing water and bake for 40-50 minutes. Remove from the oven once the egg mixture has set.

Serve with yellow rice and raisins, sambals, chutney, desiccated coconut and banana.

TIPS

- You can make the dish up to step 5 and refrigerate until needed. The longer you allow the flavours to mingle, the more delicious it is.
- Bobotie is also excellent for freezing (if you are lucky enough to have any leftovers). Freeze up to 2 months in freezer safe containers and then just heat and eat on those days when quilting requires more attention than cooking.