Sausage and Pumpkin Pasties

Serves 4

The Crust

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. baking powder
½ cup cold butter
½ cup cold vegetable shortening
8 tbsp. ice cold water
1 egg for egg wash + 2 tbsp. water

In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt, and baking powder. Cut the butter and shortening into small cubes, then add to the flour mixture. With a pastry cutter, or with a big fork, cut the fat into the flour until they are pea sized. Add cold water 2 tablespoons at a time, stirring with a fork. Keep adding water and lightly mixing with the fork until the dough mostly holds together. Turn out onto a floured surface and press together to form a ball. Flatten the ball to about 1" thick, wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

You will want to make your filling before the next step, giving yourself time to cool the filling.

Roll out dough on a floured surface 1/8" thick. Using a small plate, or like I do, a ramen bowl as a guide, cut into ½" circles (more or less), or whatever size you wish your pasties to be. You can make canape sized ones of you want, or monster pies. I don't care. Do what you feel. Anyway, once you have your rolled and cut your first set of circles, pile the dough together and roll out again. I got 8 circles, but I had to roll the last bit of dough a third time to get the 8th circle, but it should be okay (over-rolling can make the dough tough).

Make an egg wash by beating the egg with the water until frothy. One at a time, brush the outside edge of each circle, put about ½ cup of the filling in the center, then push it around so that it fills ½ of the circle, leaving the edge free to press the top and bottom together.

Fold the dough in half over the filling, press the edge together lightly with your fingers, then press with the tines of a fork to make it pretty and more firmly pressed together.

Put on a baking sheet that has been lined with parchment paper, foil or Silpat (I prefer parchment for this one) and repeat with the rest of the dough. Brush each pastie lightly with egg wash and cut a few slits in the top with a small knife. Bake at 400o Fahrenheit for 30 to 45 minutes depending on how your oven behaves - until nicely browned.

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The Pumpkin Filling

2 tbsp. butter, divided
1 sugar pie pumpkin, peeled seeded and cut into ½" cubes (you can substitute butternut or acorn squash)
1 yellow onion, diced
2 tbsp. fresh sage, chopped
salt and pepper
½ lb. bulk breakfast sausage
¾ cup chicken stock
1 tbsp. dark cocoa powder
1 tbsp. flour
4 oz. Gruyere cheese, grated (you can substitute just about any cheese you like)

Heat a medium skillet over medium high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the butter and when it is melted, add the onions. Season with salt and pepper and sauté until translucent. Add the sage, sauté another 30 seconds or so, then put the onions in a medium sized mixing bowl.

Put the skillet over the heat again and add the second tablespoon of butter, then the pumpkin, seasoning with salt and pepper. Sauté, stirring every now and then until the pumpkin is browned and mostly cooked through.

Put the pumpkin in the bowl with the onions. Put the skillet back on the heat AGAIN and add the sausage, breaking it up as you cook it. Let the sausage brown and when just cooked through, add the cocoa powder and flour. Stir to coat the sausage, then add the chicken stock, stirring constantly. Let simmer down until the sausage is coated in a thickened sauce, not swimming in broth. Add to the pumpkin and onions and let cool. If you are in a hurry, spread it out on a baking sheet and move it around every now and then. (FYI- hot filling on pie dough is a no-no. You would end up with a sticky mess.)

Once your filling is cooled to at least room temperature, add the cheese and mix thoroughly.

p.s. It is not a bad idea to prepare this an hour or a couple of days ahead and refrigerate until ready to use.

To Serve

Either put them all on a platter and let people pick them up and eat them- add napkins, or plate them and add a nice fall salad. Either way, they are just as yummy!

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