

BACON BBQ SPARE RIB POT PIES

FEEDS: 4 PREP: 20 minutes COOK: 3½ hours

When I told my son I was writing a new book, he asked if he could contribute a recipe. Since he has all the subtlety of a 10-pound hammer, we had a lot of back and forth as to what the recipe would be. He also spent plenty of time trying to invent a whole new food group, but we eventually settled on this. It's big, it's bold, it's dripping with bacon and BBQ, and it's very Bjorn.



THE SAUCE

200 g streaky bacon
Olive oil
1 onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1 × 750 ml bottle your favourite BBQ
or braai sauce (Bjorn likes Woolies
Sweet & Sticky)
Zest and juice of 1 lime or small lemon
A splash of water to thin if necessary

THE RIBS

2 racks (1–1½ kg) of pork spare ribs
Olive oil
Your favourite braai or BBQ spice
1 C beer

THE PASTRY

450 g cake wheat flour, plus extra
for dusting
1 tsp salt
¾ C water
180 g butter
2 egg yolks, beaten
6 × mini (9 × 5 cm) loose-bottomed
pie tins

Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Arrange the bacon rashers on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Pop it into the oven and cook the bacon for 20–25 minutes, or until it's crispy. Drain the bacon on some paper towel and let it cool before chopping fine.

Set a medium-sized pot or pan over medium heat. Heat a glug of oil, then fry the onions until they soften and begin to brown. Add the garlic and fry for a minute until fragrant. Pour in the BBQ sauce and warm it until it just starts to bubble, then remove the pot from the heat. Mix in the chopped bacon, then stir in the zest and lime or lemon juice. If you think the sauce is too thick, mix in a little water, then set aside.

Place the ribs in a roasting dish, brush them with olive oil and season with braai or BBQ spice before basting with a layer of the sauce. Make sure the ribs are meat-side up, then pour the beer around the ribs. Cover the dish and wrap it tightly with foil. Roast the ribs in the oven, still at 180 °C, for 2 hours. After the 2-hour mark, remove the foil and lid, and baste the ribs with more sauce. Turn on the grill and continue cooking to caramelize, but keep an eye on it. When the ribs are sticky, shiny and charred, remove them from the oven to cool.

Sift the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl. In a pot, bring the water and butter to a boil, then make a well in the middle of the flour and pour in the butter mixture. Mix with a spoon or spatula until the dough comes together into a ball. Let it cool for a few minutes before rolling.

Dust your work surface with flour, then roll the pastry out to R5-coin thickness. Use a pie tin as a guide to cut out 6 lids for the pies. Bring the dough back together, reroll and use a side plate to cut 6 circles for the casings. Place the casings in the tins and work the pastry around the edges and up, leaving a lip just above the rim of each tin.

Turn the oven back on to 180 °C. Debone the cooled ribs and give the meat a rough chop. Mix the rest of the sauce into the meat, then spoon some filling into each pie casing, but not above the lips. Eggwash the lips, then place the lids on top of the pies. Use your fingers to pinch the pastry closed, then cut a slit into the top of each pie with a sharp knife. Eggwash the tops, then place the pies on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 40–45 minutes, until the pastry is golden. Allow to cool slightly for at least 15 minutes, then pop the pies out of the tins. Garnish as desired.