

COOKING FOR KIDS

Chris Avey, award-winning chef at the University of East Anglia nursery, shares some tried and tested ideas for feeding the family

Easy empanadas

The empanada is a traditional Latin American pie, not unlike a Cornish pasty. Kids love them as they're easy to eat, and they can be baked or fried, hot or cold, sweet or savoury, large or small, snack or main course! There are as many alternatives for the pastry as there are for the fillings, from plain shortcrust style to a hot-water dough like a pork pie. Here's one of my favourites – I also love seafood empanadas, and brie-and-cranberry is guaranteed to please – but once you've mastered the art, you can experiment with all sorts of different fillings.

Pastry:

Rub the butter into the flour until you have a breadcrumb texture.

Stir in the egg yolk, then gradually mix in milk or water until you have a smooth but firm dough.

Put in a fridge to chill for about 30 minutes.

Roll out to about 3mm thick.

Using a large plain cutter or cutting round a small saucer, cut 10cm circles and brush around the edge of half of each circle with beaten egg. Place a spoonful of filling in each one (don't overfill or the pies will burst). Fold each pie over and crimp the edges together with your

Shopping list

Pastry:

255g plain flour, sifted with a pinch of salt
75g butter, diced
1 egg yolk
about 50ml milk or water
1 egg, beaten, for glazing

Filling:

1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 small carrot, finely diced
1 medium potato, peeled and diced
225g lean minced beef
about 12 green olives, sliced
a handful of raisins
1 tbsp tomato purée
1/2 tsp ground cumin
salt and pepper
chilli powder to taste
100ml stock of your choice, made up

fingers or a fork. Glaze with egg yolk, then bake in a medium oven for about 15 minutes until golden brown.

Filling:

Heat a little oil and fry the onion, garlic and carrot until they begin to soften.

Add the mince and fry for 3–4 minutes until browned, then add the spices and seasonings and fry for a minute more.

Add the rest of the ingredients, cover and simmer for about 25 minutes, until the meat and potatoes are cooked. Check the seasoning, then leave to cool.