DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: Mushroom Pasties.

These pasties make an ideal tourney food. They can be prepared ahead of time and either frozen or chilled and stored in an air-tight container. When warmed to room temperature, they are ready to be eaten. No special care needs to be taken to keep them cool, as nothing in the ingredients will spoil when packed into a feast basket. Served with carrot sticks, pickles and fruit, they make a well-balanced luncheon for a hungry fighter or spectator.

ORIGINAL RECEIPT(S):

FILLING (from *Le Menagier de Paris)*: Champignons d'une nuit sont les meilleurs, et sont petits et vermeils dedans, clos dessus: et les convient peler, puis laver en eaue chaude et pourboulier; qui en vault mettre en paste, si y mette de l'uille, du frommage et de la pouldre. Item, mettez les entre deux plats sur charbons, et mettez un petit de sel, du frommage et de la pouldre. L'en les treuve en la fin de May et en Juin. *Translation:* Mushrooms of one night are the best, if they are small, red inside, and closed at the top: and they should be peeled and then washed in hot water and parboiled, and if you wish to put them in pastry, add oil, cheese, and spice powder. You can find them at the end of May and in June.

TO MAKE A PUFF PAST (from Sir Digby): Take a gill of cold-water; two whites of Eggs, and one yolk; to a quart of Flower, one pound of Butter; so rowl it up, but keep out of the Flower so much as will rowl it up. NOTE: Gill = ¼ pint = 4.804 fluid ounces

TO MAKE A DOUGH FOR PATES, PIES AND TARTS (from The Medieval Kitchen): 1 ¾ cups flour, 9 tablespoons butter, 1/3 cup of water, 1 scant teaspoon salt. Cut the butter into small pieces, and rub or cut it into the flour until the mixture has the consistency of sawdust. Dissolve the salt in half of the water, and add to the flour mixture. Combine quickly with your fingertips, without overworking, just until the dough comes together. If necessary, add more water as required. Form into a thick disk, wrap in plastic wrap or waxed paper, and leave to rest in the refrigerator at least 2 hours before using.

REDACTIONS:

FILLING:
1 pound mushrooms
½ teaspoon finely chopped garlic
1 onion, chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried, chopped parsley
¼ pound grated cheese (parmesan)

Chop the mushrooms and onions, sauté along with the garlic in olive oil. Add the parsley, salt, pepper and cheese. Allow to cool slightly before filling the pasties.

PASTRY:
2 1/4 Cups of flour
12 tablespoons butter (slightly chilled)
¼ Cup water
½ teaspoon of kosher salt

Dice the chilled butter into small cubes. Cut into flour, until the mixture has a consistency of cornmeal. Dissolve salt into the water and add slowly to the flour/butter mixture until the pastry has the proper consistency to form into a smooth ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 2 hours. Flour a pastry board and roll out into dough about ¼ inch thick, cut into small circles.

Place filling into the circles, fold over. Crimp the edges with a fork. Baste the pasties lightly with melted butter or spray with a prepared cooking spray (Pam). Bake at 400 degrees on a slightly greased cookie sheet for about 10 minutes until golden brown. Chill or freeze in an airtight container or ziplock bag.

TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS:

There are no recipes for pastry dough in *Le Menagier*. In fact, I was only able to find two recipes for pastry dough, neither of which dates to the same time period as the recipe for the mushroom filling. There might be several reasons for this. The first theory is that pastry dough was such a "basic" recipe, that it did not need to be written down. The second is that medieval cookbooks were largely written by chefs who prepared dishes for the upper-class in society and their documented recipes tend to be those for feasts or banquets where simple pies or tarts were unlikely to be served. A third theory is that many medieval cooks did not have ovens, they worked instead with patissiers, to whom they brought their fillings to be put into pies and baked. Finally, it could be that the crust was not meant to be eaten, but was only prepared to hold the filling. These crusts or "coffins" might have been made only from flour and water.

The pasty crust recipe I used is quite similar to the one found in *The Medieval Kitchen,* but has more butter and less water, which in my opinion makes it more flavorful. (The puff pasty recipe in Sir Digby is not substantial enough to hold this hearty filling.) While similar to pastry crust recipes found it medieval times, it is a pastry crust recipe that was passed down to me by my grandmother. Rather than filling a tart or pie crust, I have folded these into small crescent shapes. This makes them easier to pick up and eat at a tourney. Please see my article, "Pasties, the Medieval Sandwich" from the Spring of 2007 edition of *Tournaments Illuminated* for more information on the history of the pasty.

No type of mushroom is specified in *Le Mangier,* however my research leads me to believe that the porcini mushroom is the mushroom available today that most closely resembles the mushrooms described in the medieval recipe. The porcini mushroom is described as:

> Robust, meaty porcinis can be "normal" size, two inches in diameter, or can grow to a giant eight-inch diameter, when the cap will expand from umbrella-shaped to nearly flat. The color ranges from yellow brown to dark red brown, with a firm, smooth, moist texture. Ancient Greeks and Romans prized these stubby mushrooms. Today they are enjoyed as culinary gems all over the world. Prevalent in French cuisine, cèpes are added to tarts and buttery dishes. They are prevalent in Italian sauces, pastas and risottos. Even the liquid from soaking the dried porcinis is a delicious ingredient in soups and sauces. They are available fresh June through November. The heartiest, most savory of dried mushrooms, they are essential in deep-flavored sauces.[1]

Most medieval cheese recipes produce something similar to today's Farmer's Cheese, a soft cheese suitable for spreading on bread and crackers. However, a brand of hard cheese known as "Horns of the Moon", (similar to parmesan) was available during this time period in countries surrounding the Mediterranean. A soft cheese would be quite suitable for making a tart or pie, but I have chosen to use the parmesan as experimentation has shown that it makes a better filling (less runny) for a pasty.

The recipe from *Le Menagier* calls for parboiling the mushrooms and does not specify using garlic or onions. However, I have found that sautéing the mushrooms and using the garlic and onions, very common ingredients in many medieval tart or pie recipes, gives the pasties a better flavor. In addition, the recipe in *Le Menagier* only specifies powdered spices, leading one to believe that common spices such as salt, pepper, cinnamon, clove, ginger, nutmeg, or cardamom would have been used. I used salt and pepper, but instead of other spices, I used chopped parsley. First, parsley would have been more readily available, as most kitchen gardens grew herbs to flavor foods. Secondly, spices such as cinnamon were very expensive and thus only available to the upper classes of society. Finally, parsley gives the pasties a flavor more familiar to our modern palates than would some of the period spices mentioned above.

The recipe in *Le Menagier* does not call for basting the pasties, as it is a recipe for a tart or pie. I have found references to using fat or lard to lightly grease the cover of a pie or tart. The pasties, made according to my redaction, will accommodate the food restrictions of vegetarians in our Society.

The only modern appliance used was a gas oven, as I do not have a woodburning oven, nor is my husband likely to allow me to build one in our backyard.

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[1]Information on types of edible mushrooms found on the May 27, 2008, on the Worldwide Web at: http://www.thenibble.com/reviews/main/vegetables/specialty-mushrooms.asp

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