

CHICKEN AND HEART OF PALM SQUARES

(from the Bewitching Kitchen)

for puff pastry:

(makes a little more than you'll need)

345 g unsalted butter, frozen

1 tablespoon sugar

1½ teaspoons salt

300g all-purpose flour + 2 Tbsp (to toss with grated butter)

80 g whole milk, cold

80 g water, cold (may not use it all)

1 egg for egg wash

for the filling:

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 lemon (to poach chicken)

salt and ground black pepper to poach chicken breasts

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, finely diced

2 cloves garlic

salt and ground black pepper

2 large tomatoes

2 tablespoons tomato paste

100 g hearts of palm, cut in ¼ inch rounds

100 g frozen peas (no need to defrost)

80 g cream cheese (full-fat)

Sriracha sauce

fresh cilantro to taste

1 lemon

2 tablespoons flour

½ cup whole milk

Mix in a large bowl the 300g flour, sugar, and salt. Set aside.

Grate the butter using a food processor with a grating disk attachment. Toss it with 2 Tbsp flour and reserve.

Take 155 g of the grated butter and mix with the flour in the large bowl, tossing with your hands to form reasonably small crumbles. Keep the rest of the butter in the freezer. Add to the flour/butter mixture all the cold milk and half of the water. Make a smooth dough, trying to handle it as little as possible. Adjust with water and or more flour.

Roll it out as a rectangle, about 12 inches long and 4 inches wide. Add roughly 50 g of frozen grated butter to the center of the dough. Fold bottom half up, add 50 g more butter to the folded portion. Fold the top portion down, covering the butter. Turn the dough so that one open side is facing you. Roll it out as before, add the leftover grated butter exactly the same way. Fold and place in fridge for 30 minutes.

Roll the dough as before, fold two more times without adding any more butter. Roll out as a rectangle and keep in fridge until filling is ready and cold.

Roll out about 1/3 of the dough (roughly 300 g) as a square a little bigger than 12 inches. Do the same for another third of the dough. Cut 12 squares from each piece of dough, punching a star using a cookie cutter in the center of half the squares (they will be the top of the pastry).

Place the squares that will be the bottom over parchment paper. Add enough cool chicken filling, brush the sides with egg wash, place the top pastry and push the edges to close it down. Brush the top with egg wash and bake at 400F for about 25 minutes, until golden brown.

FOR THE FILLING (can be made a couple of days in advance)
Poach the chicken breasts very gently in water seasoned with salt, pepper, soy sauce and lemon juice. I like to bring the water to almost a boil, turn the heat off, and leave the chicken in the pan for 15 minutes. Keep in mind it will cook longer in the pie. When chicken is poached and cool enough to handle, shred the meat with your fingers or a couple of forks. Reserve.

Sautee the onion and garlic in olive oil with a touch of salt and pepper in a large skillet until fragrant. Add the shredded chicken breast, tomatoes, tomato paste, hearts of palm pieces and cook for a couple of minutes,

stirring. Dissolve the flour in the milk, whisking well to avoid lumps. Pour into the meat mixture and heat until it starts to thicken. Add the cream cheese, then the frozen peas and mix everything gently. Add the Sriracha sauce, adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if needed. Add the minced cilantro, lemon juice and allow the mixture to cool completely before assembling the pastries.