



**46 Lot** is a department in the Midi-Pyrénées region of southern France. It is home to dramatic cliff-top villages such as Rocamadour, known for the Cité Religieuse complex of religious buildings.

To the northeast, the Padirac Cave has underground lakes and unusual rock formations. South, the Pech Merle Cave features prehistoric rock art. Cahors is a town known for its red wine. Agriculture is highly varied, reflecting in part the range of different natural conditions found in the area. Beef and dairy cattle raising is widespread, although concentrated primarily in the upland areas of the Pyrenees and the Massif Central. Sheep farming, for the production of Roquefort cheese, is practiced in the Pyrenees and Aveyron. Cereals, predominantly corn (maize), are cultivated in the central lowland areas around Toulouse and in Gers. The districts of Fronton in Haute-Garonne and Cahors in Lot specialize in viticulture. Gers is known for the production of Armagnac. Vegetable and fruit cultivation has developed on a large scale in Tarn-et-Garonne, while the fattening of geese and ducks for the production of foie gras is widespread.

The Lot Valley region is famous for foie gras, saffron, truffles, duck, cured meats, Malbec wine, cheese, chestnuts, walnuts, prunes and more. Look out for variations of duck, wild mushrooms, confits, stews, wild boar (sanglier), deer, lamb roasts and casseroles. There is also a wide range of delicious cured hams and sausages and delectable cheeses such as Cantal and soft goat cheeses (cabécous).

**Foie Gras** is the liver of a duck or goose fed on a very rich diet. The result is a rich, deep flavour with a smooth texture – best served with lightly toasted bread and a good glass of red.

**Duck Rillete** is duck legs braised in an aromatic stock, shredded and mixed with armagnac and spices and sealed into a serving dish with duck fat to make spread for a toasted baguette or a delicious topping for a salad.

**Truffles** come from the village of Lalbenque, including the famous black truffle. It grows in the wood, near the roots of truffle trees, and is very rare and difficult to find.

**Saffron** takes up a total of 3 hectares, and there are only 60 producers, making this “handmade” spice a truly family and expensive affair.

**Chestnuts** can be used in every course of a meal, in salads, in the meat sauce, with cheese and even chestnut ice-cream, without forgetting the chestnut wine and liquor.

**Laguiole** is made from full unpasteurized cow's milk and has a thick greyish-orange rind and a rich creamy texture that makes it a great table cheese.

**Cantal** is the most senior of the Auvergne cheeses and owes its taste of butter and liquorice to the flowers of the mountain summer pastures, the diet of the local cows. It can be mild, medium or mature

**The Pélardon** is a round soft-ripened cheese covered in a white mould.

**The Rocamadour** is a small, round and mild cheese made from an unpasteurised milk from the black eyed ewes.

**Charcuterie** in Lozere is the place to go for drying and maturing of salt meats like the fricandeau, the herb sausage, the potato sausage or the dry Lozere ham.

**Cahors Wine** includes Malbec or "black wine" is dark red with scents of berry fruits and liquorice. It is rich, tannic and complex.

**Desserts** make use of the local strawberries, kiwis and prunes to make fruit tarts and crepes.

**Armagnac** is an elegant, if slightly rustic, eau-de-vie.

## **Tourtier**

Try this Christmassy meat pie. Encased in puffed pastry, it's a delicious mix of pork, beef and veal

Preparation Time; 40mins, Cooking Time; 2hrs, serves 4 to 6

## **Ingredients**

1 1/2 tbsp vegetable oil

175g pork mince

175g lean beef mince

200g veal mince  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 large carrot, grated  
1 celery stick, finely chopped  
1 large garlic clove, crushed  
175ml red wine  
1 tsp ground cloves  
1/2 tsp ground mace  
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg  
3 thyme sprigs  
1 bay leaf  
175ml beef stock  
35g rolled oats  
320g pack ready-rolled shortcrust pastry  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
320g pack puff pastry sheets

## **Method**

Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat.

Fry the meat in batches until browned.

Tip into a large bowl and set aside.

Heat the remaining oil in the same pan, then add the onions, carrot, celery and garlic.

Fry for 8-10 mins until softened.

Add this to the meat.

Simmer the wine in the pan for 10 mins to reduce.

Tip in the meat and veg, then the spices, thyme, bay and stock.

Cook for 30 mins, uncovered.

Stir in the oats and simmer for 15 mins.

Discard the bay, then season.

Cool completely.

Heat the oven to 200C(fan 180C)gas 6.

Line a 20cm loose-bottom tin with the shortcrust pastry, pushing it into the sides of the tin.

Leave 2cm of pastry overhanging and trim away the excess.

Prick the bottom with a fork, cover with baking parchment and fill with baking beans.

Bake for 15 mins.

Remove the parchment and beans, and bake for another 15 mins until golden.

Trim the edges with a serrated knife and pack in the meat filling.

Brush some of the egg around the edge of the pastry, then drape the puff pastry over the top, trim the edges and crimp all the way round with a fork.

Use the puff pastry offcuts to make decorations for the pie.

Brush with more egg and make 4-5 holes in the top.

Can be frozen for up to six weeks at this stage. Defrost thoroughly before baking.

Bake at 190C(fan 170C) gas 5 for 40-50 mins.

Leave to rest for 10 mins before serving.