

Title:

Recipe - Shepherd's Pie

Word Count:

598

Summary:

Traditional nursery food has made a come back in our family recently. I haven't bothered making shepherd's pie (or cottage pie, as it is also known) for ages, as the children just used to eat the potato from the top and leave the mince.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Traditional nursery food has made a come back in our family recently. I haven't bothered making shepherd's pie (or cottage pie, as it is also known) for ages, as the children just used to eat the potato from the top and leave the mince. Mince in general has been rejected too. If I use the same minced beef to make meatballs or burgers the kids devour it, but they hate picking out all the little bits of vegetables that I hopefully put into it, when I make the shepherd's pie, in the hope of smuggling a few vegetables into their diet. Anyway my son actually requested shepherd's pie the other day, so yesterday I made it and they gobbled it up, vegetables and all, several servings each, so I've gained one more dish for the regular list.

Recipe for Shepherd's Pie - to feed four:

500g/1lb good quality minced beef or lamb (hamburger beef)
1 onion
2 carrots
1 stick of celery
1 clove garlic
2 large fresh tomatoes or half a tin of tomatoes
2 tablespoons olive oil
a dash of wine
a few drops Worcestershire sauce
2 bay leaves
salt and pepper
water or stock
potatoes

small piece of butter - about 20g/1oz and milk to mash with

Finely chop the onion and saute over a low heat in the olive oil until soft and translucent. Add the carrot, celery and garlic also finely chopped. Saute all together for five minutes. Turn up the heat and add the meat, breaking up the lumps and cooking until it has just lost the raw redness. Don't overdo it at this point. Add the splosh of wine, (white or red, whatever you have open. If you don't have any it's not essential) and stir till it has evaporated the alcohol. Add the tomatoes skinned and chopped. Now put in the rest of the seasonings and pour in enough water or stock to only just cover the meat. Bring to a simmer, put on a lid and leave to cook at a simmer for 1-2 hours.

The quantity of potatoes depends on how many you have to feed, you can have a thin layer of potato topping or if you need to stretch the meat to feed lots of people, a really thick layer of potato, which is what the children prefer anyway. Peel the potatoes and boil them till soft. Then drain and mash them with the butter, milk and salt and pepper until they are soft, but not too runny, mashed potatoes. In a roasting dish or any ovenproof but not too shallow dish, put the cooked meat in a thick layer, then top with the mashed potatoes. Smooth them out with a fork, so there are lines and swirls and peaks of potato that will brown nicely and put the dish into a preheated oven 200C/400F for twenty minutes or until the top has browned to golden. If the meat and potatoes have only just finished cooking and still hot you can just brown the top under the grill. This can all be assembled and kept in the fridge until needed too, then it would need at least thirty minutes to cook through again.

Traditionally shepherd's pie was made with minced lamb and cottage pie with minced beef but my family has always called both shepherd's pie. It also used to be a dish to use up leftover cooked meat from a roast, rather than starting fresh with raw mince, but we like it like this - comfort food for winter.

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