

Chef from the Hood Recipes



Chef:

Rory McNamara

Photographer for our Chef from the 'Hood series

Recipe:

Shepherd's Pie

Ingredients

For the top of pie:

3 pounds potatoes, scrubbed, cut into large chunks, boiled, then coarsely mashed with enough butter & milk or cream plus salt & pepper to make them taste good. Rory prefers to leave the skins on!

For the filling under the potato top:

1 & 1/2 pounds of lean ground beef (fairly lean)

about 2 tablespoons olive oil (to coat large skillet)

1 large yellow onion, diced

3 large cloves of garlic, pressed

handful of baby carrots, thickly sliced

2 bell peppers, 1 red & 1 green, diced

2 or 3 tomatoes, diced

2 handfuls of fresh green beans, topped & tailed

A few small, dried hot red chilies, chopped

(or use a teaspoon of red pepper flakes)

1 tablespoon Lee & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce

(or use A-1 Steak Sauce)

(Optional additions: 1 cup red wine or Guinness; a handful sliced brussel sprouts &/or mushrooms)

salt & fresh ground black pepper to taste

(Optional topper: 1/4 cup grated cheddar cheese)

Red sky at night is a shepherd's delight, red sky at morning is a shepherd's warning.

~ Irish Proverb

Shepherd's pie, like most comfort foods, started out as a humble, filling lunch for working men. Imaginative cooks will fill their pie with bits of vegetables leftover from other meals. Rory admits that while he never makes this pie the same way twice, the potatoes which form the top "crust" are always mashed with their skins on for extra flavor. He says, "Mix the filling good enough, 'cause if you can recognize the shepherd under the potatoes, then all bets are off!" Serves about 6.

While potatoes boil, cook ground beef in large cast iron skillet with olive oil. When ground beef starts to loosen, add onion, garlic & bell peppers. Cook, stirring occasionally. (Make the mashed potatoes while meat cooks.) When meat is cooked, turn off the heat. Stir in the carrots, green beans, tomatoes, chilies, sauces (plus optional ingredients). Taste & season with salt & pepper. You'll need room at the top of the skillet to add a one inch thick, mounded "crust" of mashed potatoes. If there is too much filling in the pan, transfer some of it to another greased oven proof container to make a 2nd pie. Spread mashed potatoes over top of meat in the pan until edges are completely sealed. Add a design if you like with a fork, and sprinkle cheddar cheese (sparingly) over the top. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Let cool for a bit before cutting it like you would a pie. Rory says the leftover shepherd's pie tastes even better the 2nd day. Cover and refrigerate leftovers right in the pan, then reheat before serving again.