

SHEPHERD'S PIE

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Shepherd's Pie is always made with ground lamb. I use ground beef, so this is really Cottage Pie, but when I tell people we are going to have Cottage Pie, no one ever knows what I'm talking about, so please indulge me, as I refer to my Cottage Pie as Shepherd's Pie.

For the Potatoes:

- 1 1/2 pounds russet potatoes
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup half-and-half
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter
- 1 egg yolk (*optional*)

Peel the potatoes and cut into 1/2-inch cubes. Place in a medium saucepan with 1 tablespoon kosher salt and cover with cold water. Set over high heat, cover and bring to a boil. Once boiling, uncover, decrease the heat to maintain a simmer and cook until tender and easily crushed with a fork, approximately 10 to 15 minutes. While the potatoes are cooking, prepare the meat.



Place the half-and-half and butter into a microwave-safe container and heat in the microwave until warmed through, about 30 seconds. Drain the potatoes in a colander and then return to the saucepan. Mash the potatoes and then add the half and half, butter, salt and pepper and continue to mash until smooth. To make sure you have no lumps, you may want to whip the potatoes with a hand held electric mixer, but that is not mandatory. Stir in the yolk until well combined. The yolk will add richness to the potatoes and make them puff up when baked. Adding the yolk is optional and will not affect the taste of the dish.

For the Meat:

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup wine
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon freshly chopped thyme leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen peas
- 1 – 2 cups shredded Sharp Cheddar Cheese

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Heat the vegetable oil in a medium size pot and set over medium high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the onion and carrots and sauté just until the onions are translucent, approximately 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and stir. Add the ground beef, salt and pepper and cook until browned and cooked thoroughly, approximately 3 - 4 minutes, stirring occasionally to break up the meat.

Sprinkle the meat with the flour and toss to coat, continuing to cook for another minute. Add the tomato paste, chicken broth, wine, Worcestershire, thyme, and stir to combine. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer slowly 10 to 12 minutes or until the sauce is thickened slightly.

Spray a casserole or baking dish with non-stick cooking spray, add the meat mixture and spread evenly. Layer the corn kernels and peas over the meat mixture. Top with the mashed potatoes, starting around the edges to create a seal to prevent the mixture from bubbling up and smooth with a spatula.

Place on a parchment lined half sheet pan on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the shredded cheese over the potatoes and return to the oven for 5 minutes, until the cheese is melted but not brown.

Remove to a cooling rack for at least 15 minutes before serving. Shepherd's Pie is one of those dishes that will freeze well, so you may want to double the recipe and make a few for the freezer. If you are planning to freeze this for later use, cover tightly with plastic wrap before freezing. Enjoy!