Chicken Lentil Shepherd's Bake

One 9 x 13-inch/23 x 33 cm potato-topped bake, four meals · Active 40 min · Total 1 hr 40 min

Skills: Thickening a vegetable filling and keeping a potato top distinct

Ingredients

• 1 3/4 lb potatoes (800 g peeled weight), cut into chunks

• Water to cover potatoes; reserve up to 1/3 cup/80 ml before draining

• 2 tablespoons neutral oil (30 ml), divided equally between filling and mash

• 1 medium onion, chopped (150 g)

• 2 medium carrots, cut into small 1/4-inch/6 mm dice (200 g)

• 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (16 g)

• 2 tablespoons tomato paste (30 g)

• 1 cup water for gravy (240 ml)

• 1 can cooked lentils, 15 oz/425 g net, drained and rinsed (240 g drained)

• Canned cooked chicken, drained (7 oz/200 g)

• 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme (0.5 g)

• 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided

• 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

9 x 13-inch/23 x 33 cm baking dish, at least 3 qt/3 L, Saucepan for potatoes and strainer, Deep skillet with lid, Potato masher, Food thermometer

Allergens

wheat. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C. Cover potatoes with water, bring to a boil and simmer for 15–18 minutes until tender. Reserve up to 80 ml cooking water, drain well and let potatoes steam dry off heat for 3 minutes.

2. Meanwhile heat half the oil in the skillet. Cook onion and carrot over medium heat for 8 minutes. Stir in flour and tomato paste for 1 minute. Add the separate 240 ml gravy water gradually, then thyme, pepper and half the salt. Cover and simmer gently for 10–12 minutes until carrot is tender, stirring and checking the pan does not catch.

3. Fold lentils and chicken into the thick filling and heat for 3 minutes. Spread in the baking dish. Mash potatoes with remaining oil and salt; add reserved potato water a tablespoon at a time only if needed for spreading.

4. Dollop mash across the filling, spread gently and roughen with a fork. Bake for 25–30 minutes until bubbling, lightly colored on the ridges and at least 165°F/74°C in the center. Rest 5 minutes and divide into four meals.

A can is not a raw lentil measure

Use fully cooked canned lentils at their drained weight. Dry lentils need a different water amount and cooking stage.

Ingredient labels

Flour supplies wheat. Check chicken and tomato-paste labels; ordinary potato mash made with this measured oil contains no deliberate milk ingredient, but this is not an allergen-free guarantee.

A useful detail

Potatoes and filling cook alongside one another. The 100-minute total allows chopping, two complete layers, final baking and the serving rest.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 3 days. Reheat a portion to 165°F/74°C throughout. Freeze promptly cooled portions for up to 2 months and thaw in the refrigerator. If using leftover chicken, follow the earlier original storage deadline.