Lamb, Lentil and Spinach Cottage Pie

One 9 × 13-inch/23 × 33 cm cottage pie; 6 portions | Active 40 min | Cook 60 min | Total 90 min

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 lb floury potatoes, peeled (1.1 kg edible weight), cut into 1-inch/2.5 cm pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml/14 g)
- 1 large onion (200 g), finely chopped
- 8 oz cremini mushrooms (225 g), finely chopped
- 1 1/2 lb lean ground lamb (680 g)
- 2 garlic cloves (6 g), minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste (32 g)
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed (1 g)
- 2 cans cooked lentils (15 oz/425 g each), drained and rinsed (500 g total drained)
- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth (240 ml/240 g)
- 7 oz frozen chopped spinach (200 g frozen starting weight), fully cooked according to its packet, cooled and squeezed very dry (about 130 g squeezed)
- 1 teaspoon fine salt (6 g), divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g), divided
- 1/2 cup 2% milk (120 ml/122 g), warmed
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter (28 g)

Set out

Large saucepan, 12-inch/30 cm deep skillet, Deep 9 x 13-inch/23 x 33 cm baking dish, at least 4 liters capacity and about 2 1/2 inches/6 cm deep; leave at least 1/2 inch/1.3 cm headroom, Potato masher, Instant-read thermometer, Small saucepan or vented microwave-safe bowl as required by frozen-spinach packet

Allergens

Milk, Check broth label for additional allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C. Put potatoes in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Simmer 15–20 minutes until very tender; drain thoroughly. Alongside the potatoes, fully cook the frozen spinach according to its packet; cool enough to handle, squeeze very dry and chop.

2. Meanwhile, heat oil in the deep skillet over medium-high heat. Cook onion and mushrooms for 8–10 minutes, until their released liquid evaporates. Add lamb and break into small crumbles. Cook 7–9 minutes, until the meat reaches 160°F/71°C.

3. Stir in garlic, tomato paste and rosemary for 1 minute. Add drained lentils, broth, squeezed spinach, 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Simmer uncovered for 8–10 minutes, stirring, until thick and spoonable. Transfer to the baking dish.

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4. Mash the drained potatoes with warm milk, butter, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Dollop across filling, join the dollops gently and ridge the top with a fork. Keep at least 1/2 inch/1.3 cm clear below the dish rim so the filling can bubble without overflowing.

5. Bake 25–30 minutes, until potato ridges are lightly golden, edges bubble and the center reaches 165°F/74°C. Rest 5 minutes and divide into six portions, taking filling and potato in every scoop.

Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 660 kcal | Protein: 33.7 g | Carbohydrate: 57.2 g | Fat: 33.9 g | Fiber: 12.4 g. One of 6 servings. Batch yield: One 9 × 13-inch/23 × 33 cm cottage pie; 6 portions. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

A complete scoop

Draw six portions across the potato top before serving. The filling is dense enough that a shallow scoop can take mostly potato and leave the meat and lentils behind. Use a broad spoon or spatula that reaches the base so the portion includes both layers in their intended proportions.

A useful detail

The potato and filling cook at the same time. If preparing them sequentially, allow another 15–20 minutes beyond the stated total. Use the stated deep dish for the full filling and potato batch, not a shallow roasting pan.

Another way

Use 680 g lean ground beef in place of lamb and retain the 160°F/71°C minimum for the browned meat.

Replace the spinach with 130 g cooked, squeezed and chopped Swiss chard.

Keep it well

Cool shallow portions and refrigerate at 40°F/4°C or below within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep up to 3 days or freeze up to 2 months. Reheat covered until the center reaches 165°F/74°C, then uncover briefly to dry the potato surface. Transport chilled portions with two cold sources in an insulated bag.