Creamy Potato and Small-Pasta Pot

4 substantial bowls of thick potato and pasta supper · Active 20 min · Total 45 min

Skills: Coordinating potato and pasta doneness in one pot

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon neutral oil (15 ml)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (150 g prepared)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (6 g prepared)
- 1 lb 5 oz yellow potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch/1.5 cm cubes (600 g prepared)
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable stock (960 ml), divided into 3 1/2 cups/840 ml and 1/2 cup/120 ml
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme (0.5 g)
- About 1 1/2 cups small dried macaroni or ditalini (200 g)
- 1 cup milk (240 ml)
- 1 cup frozen peas (140 g)
- 3/4 cup loosely packed grated cheddar (80 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

knife and board, heavy 4-quart/4 L saucepan with lid, measuring jug, wooden spoon or heatproof spatula, box grater, food thermometer

Allergens

wheat, milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Cut the onion, garlic and potatoes, and grate the cheese. Measure the stock in 2 amounts so the final 120 ml remains available for the peas.

2. Heat oil in the saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook for 7 minutes until softened. Stir in garlic for 30 seconds.

3. Add potatoes, 840 ml stock, thyme and salt. Bring to a simmer, cover loosely and cook for 8 minutes; the potatoes should be partly tender but not breaking up completely.

4. Stir in the dry pasta and milk. Keep at a gentle uncovered simmer, stirring regularly down to the bottom. Stop this stage 3 minutes before the pasta package's full cooking time: for a 10–12-minute pasta this means 7–9 minutes here. Avoid a hard rolling boil.

5. Add the final 120 ml stock and the peas, then cook for the remaining 3 minutes, until pasta, peas and potato are tender. Mash 5–6 potato cubes against the side of the pot, then stir them back in to thicken the liquid.

6. Turn off the heat and fold in cheddar and pepper until melted. Divide into 4 bowls and serve promptly, before the pasta absorbs much more liquid.

A complete bowl

The stated four portions include all the potato, pasta, peas and cheese. Extra bread is not needed to make up the advertised yield.

Ingredient labels

Check pasta and stock labels; some pasta contains egg and some stocks include additional allergens.

A useful detail

This is deliberately thicker than soup. The final measured stock and mashed potato should produce a spoonable sauce around the pieces, not a dry mass or a bowl of clear broth.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, and keep at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days. The pasta absorbs liquid during storage. Reheat each portion with about 2 tablespoons/30 ml water, stirring, until it reaches 165°F/74°C throughout.