

Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie

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"We recently made these lentils on Good Friday. They were such a big hit with the staff, we didn't even need the topping!" – Chef Jean

Ingredients:

Lentil Filling

- 1 tablespoon **olive oil**
- 3 large **yellow onions**, diced
- 4 cloves **garlic**, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh **thyme** leaves, roughly chopped
- 2 teaspoons fresh **rosemary** leaves, roughly chopped
- 3 tablespoons **tomato paste**
- 1/2 cup **dry red wine**
- 1 1/2 cups **lentils**
- 3 3/4 cups **vegetable broth**
- 2 **bay leaves**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons **sweet or hot paprika**
- Dash of **kosher salt or sea salt** as needed
- Freshly cracked **black pepper** to taste



Mashed Potato Topping

- 20 ounces **Russet potatoes**
- 16 ounces **cauliflower**, cut into large florets
- 1 1/2 teaspoons **kosher salt**, plus more to taste
- 1 **rosemary** sprig (optional)
- 4 tablespoons **butter** (or olive oil)
- 1/2 cup lite **coconut milk**
- Freshly cracked **black pepper** to taste

Instructions:

Make the Lentil Filling:

1. Heat **olive oil** in an ovenproof 12-inch skillet over medium/medium-high heat until hot.
2. Add the **onions** with a couple pinches of **salt** and sauté for 8-10 minutes, or until most of the onions are browned. Stir occasionally to prevent burning, but not too often so that they can brown. Add the **garlic, thyme, and rosemary** and cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent burning.
3. Push the **onions** to the edges of the pan so there's an empty space in the middle of the pan. Add the tomato paste into the empty space and stir for 2-3 minutes, or until it darkens in color. Reduce the heat to medium, as needed.
4. Pour in the **red wine** and deglaze the pan, stirring up any browned bits, until the liquid has mostly evaporated for about 3-4 minutes.
5. Add the **vegetable broth**, along with the **lentils, bay leaves, and paprika**. Stir to combine and increase the heat to bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat to maintain a rapid simmer, and simmer until the lentils are just tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed, 25-30 minutes.
6. Taste for seasonings.

Make the Mashed Potato Topping:

1. Peel the **Russet potatoes** and then rinse them under cold water. Chop the potatoes into eighths.
2. Place the **potatoes and cauliflower florets** in a large saucepan or Dutch oven and add just enough water to cover. Add 1 1/2 teaspoons **kosher salt** and stir to combine. Place the **rosemary** sprig on top. Bring to a boil and cook until both potatoes and cauliflower are fork-tender and are very soft when poked, about 15 minutes.
3. Thoroughly drain the **potatoes and cauliflower** in a colander (squeezing out any water if needed) and discard the rosemary sprig.
4. Return the vegetables to the saucepan. Add in the **softened butter, lite coconut milk, along with salt and black pepper** to taste. Mash everything together using a handheld potato masher, or use a handheld mixer.

Assemble the Shepherd's Pie:

1. Preheat the oven to **375°**. If your skillet is ovenproof and has enough space, leave the **Lentil Filling** in there. If not, transfer it to a large baking dish. Smooth the Lentil Filling out. Then, spoon and carefully spread out the **Mashed Potato Topping** on top, covering the whole surface.
2. Bake for 20-30 minutes, or until the Lentil Filling starts to bubble up.