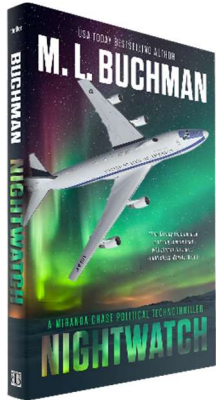


Shepherd's Pie (2 ways)



Nightwatch

Miranda
Chase #12

“Shoot me now, please!” Andi collapsed on the bed of their Gig Harbor team house.

“I don't have a gun with me.” Miranda wore a long flannel nightgown as she brushed her teeth.

“Pretty please.” She'd survived the evening being all-polite with Mother, but it had been touch and go.

Dunagan Irish Pub & Brewery was a team favorite, but clearly not up to Mother's standard. Andi's preferred Irish stew was bucking for release as she flopped across the foot of the bed. Miranda's shepherd's pie didn't appear to be bothering her in the slightest.

Miranda approached from the far side of the bed and looked at her upside down. “If I were to shoot you, you would be dead.”

“That's the point.”

“Am I right that would upset your mother in the morning?”

“Not half as much as it would upset me having to face her tomorrow morning.”

Miranda sank to sit on the bed by Andi's head. “I don't understand. I try so hard, but I don't.”

NOTE: We love the lentil shepherd's pie, but it takes more time. But when we're in the mood for a quick but scrumptious meal, the fast option works great!

Lentil Shepherd's Pie (the slow one)

Active time: 1 hour / Total time: 2 hours total (Serves 6-8 or great leftovers)

The Topping

- 3-1/2 lbs. potatoes, peel and cut into 2"-ish chunks – drop into large pot of cold water (enough to cover) to keep them from turning brown
- 1 c. milk or broth (any kind, chicken is particularly good here)
- 2 tsp. mustard of choice
- salt and pepper to taste
- Cheddar cheese, grated (keep separate)

The Filling

- The Sauté – Part I
 - 2 Tbsp. olive oil

- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, diced
- The Sauté – Part II
 - 2-3 cloves garlic, minced. Or for stronger taste, thin sliced
- The Sauté – Part III
 - 2 c. lentils, cooked
 - 1 can diced tomatoes. Fire-roasted is good. (14.5 oz.)
 - 1/3 c. broth (any kind)
 - 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
 - 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce (soy sauce can be a substitute)
 - 1/2 tsp. dried tarragon
 - 1/2 tsp. dried oregano

Instructions

The Lentils

1. Simmer lentils 20-30 minutes, don't let get mushy. Set aside to cool.

The Mashed Potato Topping

2. Bring potatoes to a boil and cook until tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Drain, put back into pot. Mash with milk or broth, mustard, salt and pepper. Set aside.
4. Preheat oven to 350 degrees when potatoes reach a boil.

Make the Filling

5. While potatoes are heating and boiling: (Sauté I) sauté onion and carrots in olive oil until soft.
6. (Sauté II) Add garlic in small open area and sauté for 30-60 seconds.
7. (Sauté III) Add lentils, tomatoes, broth, tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, and herbs. Mix. Cover and simmer gently for 10 minutes. (Now the potatoes are probably ready to mash.)

Assemble and Bake

8. Oil a 9 in. x 9 in. cooking dish and put in the filling. Spoon the mashed potatoes on top, and make an even layer with the back of the spoon.
9. Bake 25 minutes, sprinkle the grated cheese on top, and bake 5-7 more minutes.
10. Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

To spice up the filling:

- 1-1/2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 poblano chili pepper, chopped

- 1 c. frozen corn, thawed or canned corn, drained
or
- 2 Tbsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. turmeric

To spice up the topping:

- 3 cloves roasted garlic, mashed
- Pepper Jack cheese instead of Cheddar

Shepherd's Baked Potatoes (the fast way < 30 minutes)

Serves 1 person per potato

- 4 russet potatoes (if gold or sweet potato, simply cook less time)
- The Sauté – Part I
 - 2 Tbsp. butter
 - 1/2 onion, chopped
 - 1 tsp. dried thyme
 - 1 tsp. dried sage
- The Sauté – Part II
 - 3 cloves garlic, sliced thin
 - 12 oz. ground beef
 - salt and pepper to taste
- The Sauté – Part III
 - 1 c. broth, beef or mushroom
 - 3 Tbsp. ketchup
 - 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- The Sauté – Part IV
 - 1/2 c. frozen peas, thawed
 - 1/2 c. frozen carrots, or corn thawed
- The Finish
 - 2 Tbsp. butter, unsalted
 - 1 c. Cheddar cheese, grated

The Potatoes

1. Stab the 4 potatoes in several places with small knife (or they make a mess of your microwave) and microwave about 15 minutes on high, until a knife or fork passes easily through them.

The Topping

2. (Sauté I) Over medium-high heat, melt 2 Tbsp. of the butter in a large sauté pan. Cook the onion and herbs until the onion is soft.
3. (Sauté II) Scrape an opening and add the garlic, cook 30 seconds at most. Mix in before it scorches and turns bitter. Then add the beef (breaking into crumbles as you cook it), salt and pepper to taste and cook until pink disappears, 4-5 minutes.
4. (Sauté III) Stir in the broth, ketchup, and Worcestershire sauce.
5. Cook uncovered, stirring now and again until some of the liquid evaporates and it's looking saucy (wink, wink) instead of wet. (Sauté IV) Stir in the peas and carrots or corn, and cook 1-2 minutes.

The Finish

6. Preheat the broiler.
7. The potatoes are now cooked. Cut them in half lengthwise, hack up the interiors a bit with a fork to make lots of ridges and valleys without utterly destroying the skin. Spread butter on the potatoes. Put on a baking sheet and top with ground beef mixture. Top with cheese.
8. Broil until the cheese is melted and golden. 2-3 minutes.



Shepherd's Pie all golden on top.



Now that's what comfort food is supposed to look like!