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Individual Cottage Pies



Ingredients

3 tablespoons of sunflower oil
500-600g beef mince
2 large carrots
2 large onions
1 leek
2 fat cloves of garlic
130g chestnut mushrooms
2 tablespoons of tomato puree
500ml beef stock
2 tablespoons of Worcester sauce
A few sprigs of thyme
2 tablespoons of beef gravy granules
200ml hot water
100g frozen peas
Salt and freshly milled black pepper
1.2kg potatoes
120ml milk
30g butter
150g mature cheddar cheese

Preparation

1. 1. Peel and chop the carrots and slice thinly. Peel and finely chop the onion. Wash and slice the leek thinly, wipe and chop the mushrooms. Discard the stems and finely chop the thyme leaves.
2. 2. Steam the sliced carrots for 10 minutes.
3. 3. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, heat two tablespoons of sunflower oil and gently sauté the onion for 5 minutes to soften it. Add the leek and crushed garlic and cook for a further 5 minutes. Tip into a bowl and set to one side.
4. 4. In the same saucepan, heat another tablespoon of sunflower oil and cook the minced beef, stirring and breaking up any clumps of meat, until the mince is browned. Drain off and discard most of the fat then add back the cooked onion mixture. Add the

chopped mushrooms and stir together for a minute.

5. 5. Stir in the tomato puree, pour in the hot stock and Worcester sauce then sprinkle in the chopped thyme. Mix the gravy granules with the hot water and add to the pan, then stir in the frozen peas. Simmer gently for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally, then season well with salt and black pepper. Divide between 4 individual dishes and allow to cool for 5 minutes before topping with the potato.

6. 6. Peel and chop the potatoes into chunks then cook in boiling water for about 20 minutes, until tender. Drain and allow to steam dry in the pan for a few minutes, then add the milk and butter, cut into small pieces, and mash until really smooth. Use to top the minced beef in the 4 dishes, using a fork to spread it on and make a rough surface.

7. 7. Grate the cheese and sprinkle thickly onto the top of each cottage pie.

8. 8. To cook straight away, heat the oven to 220 degrees, 200 degrees fan oven and bake for 20-25 minutes until the meat is really hot and the cheese is golden and bubbling.

Cooks Note

Notes:

- For a vegetarian alternative, use vegetable stock and granules and use minced Quorn instead of beef. Top with vegetarian cheese. I usually add a little tomato juice when frying the Quorn to soften it and stop it from drying out too much.

- To make a lower calorie dish, try using sweet potato mash, or a mixture of potato, carrot and swede. Go easy on the cheese, or just top with slices of tomato and dot with a little butter. Accompany with lots of vegetables!