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by Liz Robb

Vegetarian cottage pie with smoked cheese

Ingredients

4 medium-large potatoes A knob of butter
A little milk
A large onion
2 cloves of garlic
2 small carrots
A stick of celery
A large leek
A red pepper
An aubergine
150g chestnut mushrooms
1-2 tablespoons of sunflower oil
400g can of chopped tomatoes
Salt and freshly milled black pepper
200g smoked cheese
150g cherry tomatoes

Preparation

1. 1. To prepare the vegetables, peel the onion and leek and chop finely. Peel the carrots, wash the celery and red pepper, and chop them into fine dice. Peel the cloves of garlic. Cut the aubergine into small pieces. Wipe and finely slice the mushrooms. 2. Peel the potatoes and cook them in boiling salted water until tender. Drain and allow to steam dry for a few minutes before mashing with a large knob of butter and a splash of milk until smooth.
2. 3. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large pan and gently sauté the onion for two minutes, then add the carrot, celery and crushed garlic and cook over a low heat for a further 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the pepper, aubergine and mushrooms and cook for a further 5-10 minutes, until all the vegetables are soft. Then stir in the chopped tomato, bring to a simmer and allow to cook gently for a few minutes. Season well with salt and black pepper.
3. 4. Tip the vegetable mixture into a warmed heatproof dish and spread the mashed potato on top, using a fork to fluff up the surface. Grate the cheese evenly onto the top and garnish with halved cherry tomatoes.
4. Place under a preheated grill or in a preheated oven until the pie is piping hot and the cheese is bubbling and golden.

Cooks Note

This is a simple dish, full of healthy vegetables, which you can quickly throw together and enjoy as a tasty supper, using mostly ingredients that you may already have in the fridge or store cupboard.

A visiting friend from Rome brought the scomorza affumicata with her, a gorgeous creamy Italian smoky cheese, which we used as a delicious and unusual topping for the pie; use any kind of smoked cheese that you like or, if you prefer, grate on some mature cheddar instead.