

Italian Shepherd's Pie - Baked Meat and Potato Casserole

Pasticcio di Carne e Patate | Italian-inspired beef, peas, tomato and creamy mashed potatoes.

Prep: 25 min **Cook:** 1 hr 15 min **Total:** 1 hr 40 min **Servings:** 6

Ingredients

Mashed potato topping

- 1.1 lb (500 g) Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 cup (240 ml) whole milk, warmed
- 120 g (about 1/2 cup plus 1/2 tablespoon) unsalted butter
- 2 large egg yolks
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Meat filling

- 1.2 lb (550 g) lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 3/4 cups (250 g) green peas, fresh or frozen
- 200 g (about 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons) tomato passata
- 1 teaspoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

- 1. Prepare the potatoes** Boil the potatoes in salted water until tender, about 20-25 minutes. Drain and mash while hot. Stir in the butter, then gradually add warm milk. Let cool slightly; mix in egg yolks, salt and pepper.
- 2. Soften the onion** Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-low heat. Cook finely chopped onion gently for about 15 minutes until soft and translucent.
- 3. Brown the meat** Add ground beef and cook over medium heat, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, until evenly browned. Season with salt and pepper.
- 4. Simmer the filling** Add passata and tomato paste, then the peas. Simmer on low for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add a splash of water only if needed. The sauce should remain thick.
- 5. Assemble** Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C), conventional setting. Lightly grease an 8 x 10-inch (20 x 25 cm) baking dish. Spread the beef mixture in the dish; cover evenly with mashed potatoes and make fork ridges across the top.
- 6. Bake** Bake on the middle rack for about 30 minutes, until lightly browned and bubbling at the edges. Optional: broil 2-3 minutes for deeper color, watching closely. Rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Nonna's Tips

- Use a potato masher, not a blender, to avoid gluey potatoes.
- Simmer the beef filling until thick so the pie holds together.
- For an optional Italian twist, add well-drained mozzarella between the layers or sprinkle Parmigiano Reggiano on top.

Storage

Refrigerate for 3-4 days in an airtight container, or freeze portions for 2-3 months. Reheat thoroughly in a 350°F (180°C) oven or microwave.

Estimated Nutrition (per serving)

Calories: 505 kcal | Protein: 29 g | Carbs: 26 g | Fat: 32 g | Saturated fat: 17 g | Fiber: 5 g | Sugars: 7 g | Sodium: about 240 mg before added salt. Estimates vary by ingredients.