



Technically speaking this is not actually a Shepherd's Pie. You can put pretty much anything you want in a Shepherd's Pie. It's a dish for left-overs really. But strictly speaking a Shepherd's pie is made with minced lamb and if you use minced beef it's a Cottage Pie. Shepherd's Pie was a staple dish of my childhood and we always used minced beef so that's what I'm using here. But the recipe I'm using is not the one I had as child - I've used a variation of that recipe for the [Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie](#) . So instead what I'm using for this dish is a recipe based on Jocasta Innes' The Pauper's Cookbook. It's one of my favourite recipes books. All the recipes are simple but packed with flavour. She likes to add a little kick to things as well but for me Shepherd's Pie is a very comforting dish - which to me means not spicy. So I've omitted any spice and I've added in some olives as well. I'd recommend using some juicy marinated olives, rather than the ones bottled in brine. The latter can be great if you cook them in something for a while but in this case you add the olives after the cooking.



The way I make Shepherd's Pie is Ingredients

- 250g lean minced beef
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 3 celery stalks, sliced
- 2 large garlic cloves, sliced
- 3 - 4 tbsp tomato puree (*to taste*)
- 3 tbsp dark soy sauce
- cup of olives (green & black), stoned and sliced
- 6 - 8 large potatoes, peeled and sliced
- butter
- olive oil
- salt & pepper

Instructions

1. Heat a tablespoon of olive oil in a frying pan. Add the carrots and celery. Cover the pan, reduce heat and leave for 5 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and stir around.
3. With a spoon push the veg out to the sides of the pan so that you now have space in the centre. Turn up the heat to high and add the beef in batches. Add a large spoonful, let it turn brown, then mix in with the veg, again make a clearing in the centre and add another big spoonful and so on until all the mince has been added to the pan and it is all brown.
4. Stir in the tomato puree and the soy sauce, reduce heat to the lowest setting, cover the pan and leave for 20 minutes.
5. Add the potatoes to a saucepan of water. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and boil gently for 10 - 15 minutes or until the potato is tender enough to be mashed easily.
6. When the potato is tender, drain off most of the water but not all (leave about 50ml (6 tablespoons)). Add a large lump of butter, some salt and pepper, and mash. *Alternatively you can drain off all the water, add milk instead and use this with the butter to make your mash - or if you like it really thick and creamy, use cream instead of milk.*
If cholesterol is an issue then drain off the water and add soya milk, with no butter - I do this sometimes and really it tastes quite good.
7. Take the frying pan off the heat. Stir in the olives and sprinkle over some pepper.
8. Spoon the minced beef mixture into a large deep dish and cover with the mash potato.

For a traditional Shepherd's Pie you would run your fork over the potato layer, add dots of butter or cheddar cheese or both, and bake in a pre-heated oven for 20 minutes until the top was golden brown. Personally I think the potato is just as good without a "crust".