



I made a [Shepherd's Pie](#) earlier in the week. I used to have Shepherd's Pie a lot as a child and it was one of my favourite dinners. The Shepherd's pie of my childhood used instant gravy which for some reason I just don't really use anymore and as I was making the dinner I was thinking about maybe making a vegetarian version and then I remembered how well the gravy version worked with lentils - it was like having the real thing. Or at least that's the way I remember it.

I couldn't seem to get the right "saltiness" in the gravy this time. Meat, and beef in particular, adds a certain salty quality to sauces. So rather than chuck in a mountain of salt to try and achieve this I decided to add some mustard to it and a little balsamic vinegar. Did it work? Well, I was quite pleased with the result.



The way I make Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie is **Ingredients**

- 250g green or brown lentils
- 2 tsp mixed herbs*
- 15 - 20 button mushrooms, quartered
- 1 large onion, chopped roughly
- 3 celery stalks, sliced
- 1 cm turnip slice, diced (*or you could use 2 large carrots*)
- 4 tbsp instant gravy granules
- 200ml hot water
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 6 - 8 large potatoes, peeled and sliced
- butter

- salt & white pepper
- 15 - 30g cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 tsbp sunflower oil

* *Mixed Herbs is pre-mixed set of dried herbs you can buy - you probably know this already. I just mention it because the first time I saw it in a recipe I thought it meant to add in any mix of herbs you like.*

Instructions

1. Put the lentils in a saucepan with 1 teaspoon of mixed herbs and the garlic. Cover with their depth again of hot water. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and leave to boil gently for a good 40 minutes.
2. **Once you've put the lentils on to boil you can get the vegetables ready.** Heat oil in a frying pan. Add a small pat of butter, reduce heat to a low setting, add the onions, cover pan and leave for 5 minutes.
3. Add celery, cover and leave for 5 minutes.
4. Add the turnip and/or carrots, cover and leave for 5 minutes.
5. Add mushrooms, cover and leave for 15 minutes.
6. **While the mushrooms are cooking you can prepare the mash potato.** Place the sliced potatoes in a saucepan, cover with hot water, bring to the boil, reduce heat and leave to boil gently for 10-15 minutes or until the potato is tender enough to mash easily.
7. When the potato is cooked, drain off most of the water but not all (leave about 50ml/6 tablespoons)). Add a large lump of butter, some salt and white pepper, and mash. Leave aside while you prepare the lentil-veg base.
8. **The lentils should now be cooked**, drain and stir them into the vegetables and sprinkle over 1 teaspoon of mixed herbs.
9. Blend the six tablespoons of gravy granules with the 200ml hot water.
10. Stir the gravy into the pan with the lentils and vegetables.
11. Stir in the wholegrain mustard. Taste and add salt and pepper if necessary.
12. Spoon the lentil-veg mix into a large deep dish and cover with a layer of the mash potato.
13. If you like run a fork over the potato layer before sprinkling on the grated cheese. Put the dish under the grill until the cheese has turned golden brown.
14. Serve with vegetables or salad - or even by itself. It makes a complete meal.