
Plant-Based Triple Layer Shepherd's Pie

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Invented by me! :)

1 large skillet-pie feeds 6-8 hungry bellies

Ingredients

Lentil Layer (base)

- 3 cloves of garlic, crushed and minced
- 1 large cooking onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3.5 oz of shitaki mushrooms, chopped into fairly small pieces
- 1 tsp taco seasoning (source: mountainroseherbs.com)
- ½ TBS cajun seasoning (source: mountainroseherbs.com)
- ½ TBS celery salt (source: mountainroseherbs.com)
- heaping ¼ tsp of smoked paprika
- optional: ¼ tsp red chili flakes
- 2 cups of dry lentils (I use a mixture of red and brown)
- 3 cups water
- 1 fifteen-ounce can of diced tomatoes
- ½ - ⅔ cup tomato paste
- salt to taste

Greens Layer (middle)

- 1 large bunch of collard greens, washed and roughly chopped (I would estimate this is 10-12 generous cups)
- 1 bulb of fennel, sliced and chopped into approximately ½" pieces
- salt and pepper to taste

Potato Layer (top/crust)

- 2.5-3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and halved
- water for boiling
- ¼ cup unsweetened non-dairy milk (e.g. almond milk)

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- salt & pepper to taste

Directions:

- Set the sweet potatoes to boil until tender - 20-30 minutes
- While the potatoes cook, spray the bottom of a soup pot with olive oil (or use water instead) and add garlic, onion, celery, carrot, mushrooms & seasonings for the lentil base (except salt) to the pot. Let sauté for 3-4 minutes.
- Add lentils, water, tomato and tomato paste to the soup pot and simmer for 30 minutes or until lentils are soft/cooked and flavors are well mixed.
- While the lentils are cooking and the potatoes are boiling, start your greens dish.
- To make the greens layer, add a few TBS of water to a large skillet with the heat on medium-high, then add the chopped fennel.
- Sautee fennel for several minutes, adding water as needed, until you smell the strong aroma of fennel - about 3 minutes.
- Add ¼ cup of water to the skillet and then top with all the collard greens.
- Place a cover over the skillet and turn the heat down to low.
- Allow the greens to cook on the low setting until the greens are bright green and just tender - 5-7 minutes. Do not overcook.
- If you are making this dish for tonight's meal, preheat your oven to 375 degrees F. If not, omit this step.
- At this point, the potatoes will likely be about tender. Once tender, strain off *most* but not all of the cooking water.
- Retain some cooking water in the pot of potatoes, add the other ingredients of the potato layer and mash with a hand-held masher or electric mixer. Only add as much liquid as necessary for mashing. Season with salt only as needed.
- The lentil base is ready when *most* of the liquid has been cooked off and you are left with a thick lentil porridge.
- Lightly spray the bottom and sides of a large cast iron skillet.
- Transfer the lentil base to the large skillet and ensure it evenly covers the entire bottom of the skillet.
- Next, add the collard greens & fennel to the skillet, evenly spreading the greens to cover the lentils completely.
- Finally, transfer the sweet potato topping evenly over the the skillet to cover all of the greens.
- If preparing for tonight's dinner, place the pie in the oven and cook for 20 minutes until the edges bubble.
- If preparing for a future meal, cover the skillet with aluminum foil and refrigerate for 1-3 days before cooking in the oven at 375 F for 30 minutes or until the dish is hot and the edges bubble.

Notes:

- This recipe is made to fit within a large skillet and will likely cover more than one meal. For a smaller version, simply cut the recipe in half and use a smaller skillet.
- I often make the layers and add them to the skillet early in the week, cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate for a couple of days until we're ready for this meal. This way, it only needs to go in the oven once.