

Chicken shepherd's pie with cauliflower crust

This is a lighter take on traditional shepherd's pie, using chicken and lentils as a filling topped with a cauliflower crust. Chicken and lentils make this dish rich in protein, which helps to keep blood sugar levels stable, a key factor in managing burnout. They are also rich in B vitamins, which help the body deal with stress. Lentils are a true mood boosting food packed with tryptophan, an amino acid which helps us produce serotonin, our feel-good hormone. Cauliflower is a cruciferous vegetable, high in vitamin C and antioxidants that help support our mental wellbeing.

Serves 4-6



Ingredients

- 1 large head cauliflower, trimmed and broken into small florets
- 2 cups milk of choice (unflavoured)
- 150g fresh ricotta
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely sliced
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon dried mixed herbs
- 500g good-quality chicken, minced
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 400g can puy lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 large handfuls spinach, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese



Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Place the cauliflower & milk in a saucepan & bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer until cauliflower is soft, around 10 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid & set aside to cool. Place cauliflower & ½ cup of the cooking liquid in a food processor or use a hand mixer to blend until smooth. Add ricotta & process to a mash-like consistency & set aside. If too thick add more liquid.

Heat oil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add onion, celery & carrot & cook for around 5 minutes until starting to soften. Add garlic & mixed herbs & cook for a further minute or two. Add minced chicken & cook for 4-5 minutes, using a wooden spoon to break up any lumps. Continue stirring until chicken starts to brown. Add the stock & tomato paste & bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium & cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has reduced. Add lentils, spinach & parsley.

Pour the chicken mixture into an oven proof dish, approximately 24 cms long. Top with the cauliflower mixture, spreading evenly & sprinkle over the grated parmesan. Place in the oven and cook for around 35-40 minutes or until golden brown on top. Serve with a leafy green salad.