

# Sticky Fingers Cooking®

## Irish Shepherd's Pie

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 20 / **Cook Time** 30 / **Serves** 4 - 6

## Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**mash:** to reduce food, like potatoes or bananas, to a soft, pulpy state by beating or pressure.

**mince:** to chop into teeny tiny pieces.

**sauté:** to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

**thicken:** to make a liquid mixture thicker by adding a thickening agent, like flour, cornstarch, or arrowroot powder, or by reducing the amount of liquid through boiling.

## Equipment

- Medium steamer or pot
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Skillet
- Potato masher
- Large mixing bowl
- Grater

## Ingredients

### Irish Shepherd's Pie

- 2 medium russet potatoes **\*\* (for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY sub sweet potatoes)\*\***
- 2 green onions

- 1 garlic clove
- 2 C spinach leaves
- 1/2 C mushrooms
- 1 carrot
- 1 tsp thyme, dried or fresh
- 1/2 C frozen green peas
- 1/2 C frozen corn
- 1 T tomato paste **\*\* (Omit for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY)\*\***
- 1 vegetable bouillon cube (or 1 tsp bouillon powder/paste) **\*\* (Check label for possible allergens, like gluten, soy, or nightshade, and omit if necessary)\*\***
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 to 3 T olive oil
- 3 T whole milk **\*\* (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free milk)\*\***
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 T cornstarch (or arrowroot powder)
- 1/4 C grated cheddar, Monterey jack, or Parmesan cheese **\*\* (Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese)\*\***

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Irish Shepherd's Pie

**Nightshade:** Substitute sweet potatoes for russet potatoes. Omit tomato paste.

**Gluten/Soy/Nightshade:** Check vegetable bouillon cube ingredients listed on label and, if necessary, omit from recipe.

**Dairy:** Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk. Omit cheese or substitute dairy-free/nut-free cheese.

## Instructions

### Irish Shepherd's Pie

cut + cook + mince + grate

Cut **2 medium russet potatoes** into quarters or 1-inch chunks and cook until tender, either by steaming or boiling. Mince **2 green onions, 1 garlic clove, 2 cups spinach, 1/2 cup mushrooms, 1 carrot,** and **1 teaspoon thyme** (if using fresh) into tiny pieces.

#### sauté + soften + season

Add a little oil to a skillet on your stovetop and heat over medium heat. Sauté the minced green onions, garlic, and thyme together for 3 to 5 minutes. Then add **1/2 cup green peas** and **1/2 cup corn**, along with your minced spinach, mushrooms, and carrot. Finally, add **1 tablespoon tomato paste** and **1 bouillon cube**, and cook everything for about 5 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Taste and season with salt, black pepper, or more thyme, if needed.

#### mash + mix

Mash your cooked potatoes in a large mixing bowl. Add in **2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil, 3 tablespoons milk**, and **1 pinch of salt**, and keep mixing and mashing until the potatoes are creamy. Some lumps are okay!

#### combine + stir + thicken

Combine **1 tablespoon cornstarch** with **1 tablespoon water** and then stir into the vegetable mixture in your skillet. Turn the heat off and then, if needed, add a little water, just enough to get everything nice and thick. Stir to combine.

#### spread + smooth

Spread the vegetable mixture nice and evenly out in your skillet, and then top with the mashed potato mixture. Spread the potatoes out evenly and then smooth them with the back of a spoon so that the top is somewhat level.

#### sprinkle + heat

Sprinkle **1/4 cup of grated cheddar cheese** over the top of the potatoes. Cover, turn the heat back on to medium, and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, or until everything is warmed through and the cheese is melted!

## Featured Ingredient: Spinach!

Hi! I'm Spinach!

"I'm Popeye the sailor man ... Oh, excuse me. I like to sing that song because Popeye loved me! Yep! I'm Spinach! I'm a dark green, leafy vegetable, the kind that's so good for you! I may not make you as strong as Popeye, but I'll definitely make your body healthier and stronger. Plus, I'm delicious in so many dishes, including salads, sandwiches, soups, spanakopita, and even lasagna! Don't tell anyone, but sometimes I even get sneaked into muffins and cakes."

History & Etymology

Spinach is a native plant of Persia (modern-day Iran). China produces the most spinach anywhere in the world, and in China, spinach is still known as The Persian Green.

Spinach was grown in Spain during the 8th century, and Spaniards eventually brought it to the United States.

Medieval artists extracted green pigment from spinach to use as ink or paint.

China is the world's largest spinach producer, with 85 percent of global production, and California produces 74 percent of the fresh spinach grown in the United States.

In the mid-1900s, a cartoon character named Popeye the Sailor Man caused the popularity of spinach to explode! This is because he would turn strong and powerful immediately after eating a can of spinach.

The English word "spinach" came from the 14th century French "espinache," through Latin and Arabic, originally from the Persian "aspanak."

## Anatomy

Spinach is a member of the amaranth family, making it a close relation to beets and chard.

Spinach plants are hardy and annual (meaning they need to be replanted each year). They can grow up to one foot tall.

Larger leaves grow at the base of the plant, while smaller leaves are at the top (like basil). Spinach has dark green leaves that, depending on the variety, can be either curled or smooth.

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

When buying fresh spinach, choose leaves that are crisp and dark green with a nice fresh fragrance. Avoid those that are limp, damaged, or have yellow spots.

Refrigerate spinach in a plastic bag for up to three days.

Spinach, which is usually very gritty because it is grown in sand, must be thoroughly rinsed.

Spinach can be eaten raw in salads and added raw to smoothies. Spinach doesn't have a strong taste, so it's a wonderful fuss-free addition when you want to pack in more nutrition to whatever you're cooking. It can be chopped and added to soups and stir-fries, baked into gratins, quiches, and pies, or pureed and added to dips. Spinach is super versatile. Frozen spinach is an easy substitute and works brilliantly in many recipes that call for fresh spinach.

## Nutrition

Dark leafy green vegetables are some of the best foods to feed our bodies. Specifically, dark greens like spinach keep our hearts, blood, and brains healthy.

Just half a cup of raw spinach counts as one of the five servings of fruits and vegetables you should eat daily.

Spinach is another source of vitamin K1. Do you remember that K1 helps with blood clotting? How's this for interesting: French soldiers consumed wine mixed with spinach juice during the First World War to recuperate from excessive bleeding!

Spinach is high in chlorophyll! In fact, all green vegetables (and plants) contain chlorophyll. Chlorophyll's job is to absorb sunlight and use it for energy—a process called photosynthesis. In addition, chlorophyll helps the body make red blood cells. These cells carry oxygen through the blood to our organs.