

March Recipe

Spiced Lamb with Beans

With its deliciously rich gravy and meltingly tender meat, this is a truly comforting pie which will fill your belly and put a smile on your face.

SERVES 6

**FOR THE FILLING:**

1 kg (2lb 4oz) lamb, either leg or shoulder, cut into 4cm (1½ in) chunks
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp olive oil a knob of butter
2 red onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp crushed chilli
1 small glass white wine (about 150ml/ 5fl oz)
400g (14oz) tin plum tomatoes
400g (14oz) tin borlotti beans, drained
1 tbsp golden caster sugar

FOR THE MASH:

5 large Desiree potatoes, peeled and cubed
125g (4oz) butter
1 large wine glass milk (about 300ml/ 10fl oz)

Season the lamb with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large pan over a high heat and fry the lamb in batches until browned, then set aside.

Reduce the heat, melt the butter in the pan and throw in the onions. Give them a stir and let them gently fry for about 15 minutes. Stir in the garlic. After a couple of minutes, stir in the spices, then pour in the wine. Scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to blend the spices with the wine. Let the mixture simmer for 5 minutes and then return the meat and its juices to the pan. Add the tomatoes and give it all a good stir. Leave it to gently bubble away for 1½ hours. Check it occasionally to make sure it is not burning or sticking and give it a stir. If it looks too dry, add a little water. Add the beans and sugar to the pot. Taste and season accordingly with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat. Spoon the mixture into a pie dish and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 220°C (425°F/ Gas 7). Meanwhile, boil the potatoes in plenty of salted water for about 15 minutes or until they are very tender when poked with a sharp knife. Drain well and mash with the butter, milk and plenty of salt. I use a mouli which makes a wonderful lump-free mash.

Spoon the mash all over the top of the pie, smooth with the back of your spoon leaving no holes, then use a fork or the back of a spoon to rough the surface of the mash into small peaks, which will become lovely and brown with crispy bits. Place it in the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until crisp and golden.

I like to serve this pie with braised fennel.