

Make one freeze one

Golden veggie shepherd's pie

MAKES 10 • PREP 30 mins

COOK a staggered 11/2 hrs

Easy  

You could also use three cans of rinsed and drained green lentils for this – simply make the stock, then simmer them for just 10 minutes.

FOR THE LENTIL SAUCE:

50g/2oz butter

2 onions, chopped

4 carrots, diced

1 head of celery, chopped

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

200g pack chestnut mushrooms, sliced

2 bay leaves

1 tbsp dried thyme

500g pack dried green lentils

100ml/4fl oz red wine (optional)

1.7 litres/3 pints vegetable stock

3 tbsp tomato purée

FOR THE TOPPING:

2kg/4lb 8oz floury potatoes, such as King Edwards

85g/3oz butter

100ml/4fl oz milk

50g/2oz cheddar, grated

1 To make the sauce, heat the butter in a pan, then gently fry the onions, carrots, celery and garlic for 15 mins until soft and golden. Turn up the heat, add the mushrooms, then cook for 4 mins more. Stir in the herbs, then add the lentils. Pour over the wine and stock – it's important that you do not season with salt at this stage. Simmer for 40-50 mins until the lentils are very soft. Now season to taste, take off heat, then stir in the tomato purée.

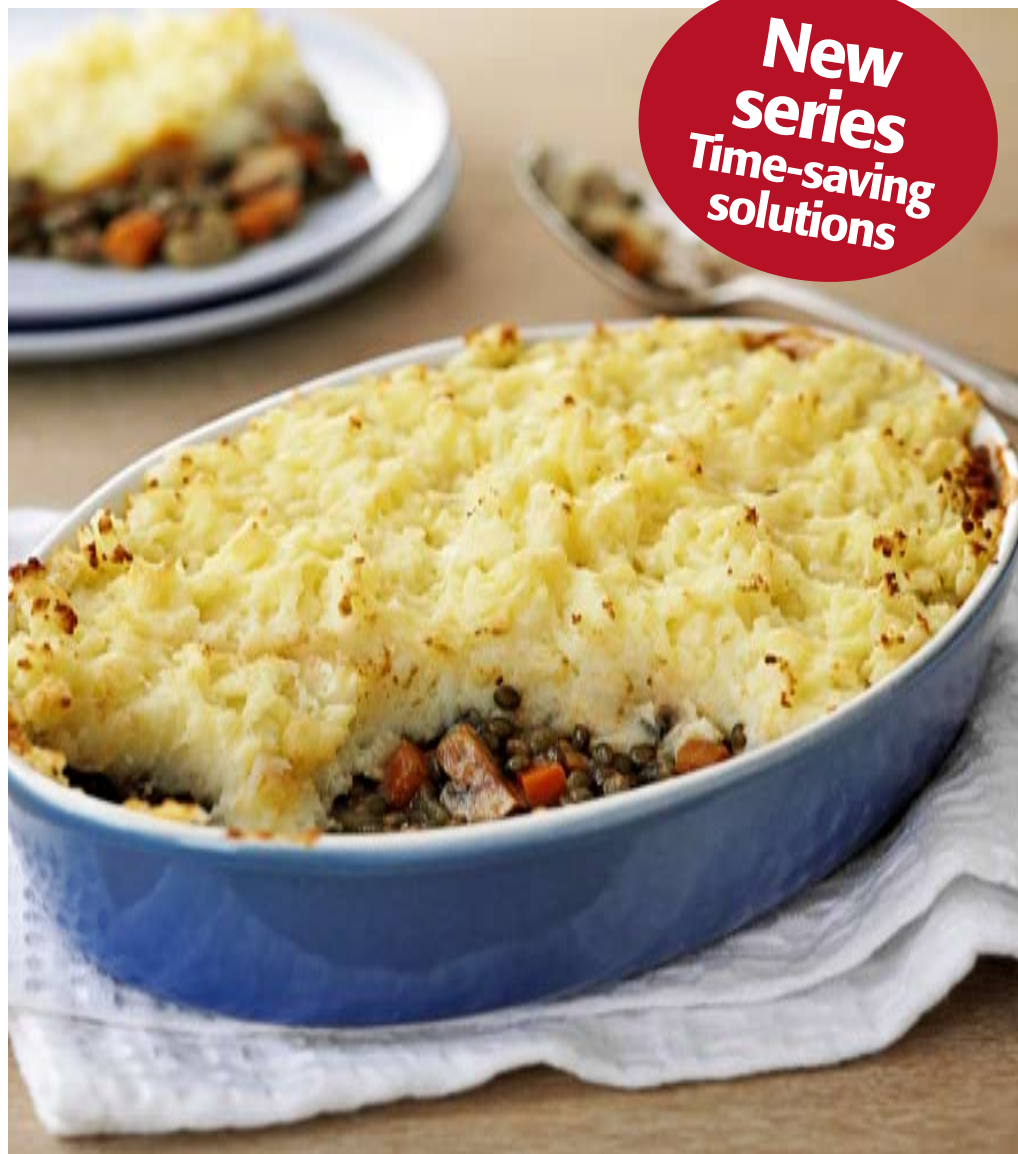
2 While the lentils are cooking, tip the potatoes into a pan of water, then boil for about 15 mins until tender. Drain well, mash with the butter and milk, then season with salt and pepper.

3 To assemble the pies, divide the lentil mixture between all the dishes that you are using, then top with mash. Scatter over the cheese and freeze (see tips, right) or if eating that day, heat oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5, then bake for 30 mins until the topping is golden.

PER SERVING 449 kcals, protein 19g, carbs 68g, fat 13g, sat fat 7g, fibre 10g, sugar 9g, salt 0.59g

If you're pushed for time, you probably find it a stretch to cook from scratch every night.

BARNEY DESMAZERY'S solution? Cook in bulk and freeze ahead
Photographs GARETH MORGANS



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MY FREEZING TIPS

- If you have lots of pie dishes, then you can make the pies in a variety of sizes to suit different occasions, then freeze them. I like to make two large pies to serve up to four, plus two individual pies – perfect for a solo meal or a delicious supper for the babysitter.
- If you don't have lots of dishes, then you can freeze the sauce, mash and cheese in separate freezer bags, then defrost and assemble when needed.

- Everything in this recipe will freeze for up to two months. For best results, defrost the prepared pies thoroughly before cooking as stated. The pies can also be cooked from frozen if short of time – first heat oven to 160C/fan 140C/gas 3, then cover the pie with foil and bake for 1 hr-1 hr 20 mins (30 mins for individual pies) until completely soft when prodded with a knife. Increase the heat to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6, uncover, then continue to cook for 20 mins until golden on top and piping hot.