

Freezer Rescue Shepherd's Pie

- 2 10-oz bags frozen vegetables (I used two types of stir fries but that doesn't matter—you couldn't taste individual veggies in the final product, just a general sort of veggie flavor. Except the water chestnuts that I didn't realize were in there. They came through loud and clear and crunchy. Surprisingly, enough, it worked)
- 1 quart low-sodium chicken broth (or stock—or vegetable stock—or beef stock)
- 1-2 tablespoons dried herbs (I used my mix but I would recommend a blend of thyme, rosemary, “poultry seasoning”, “Italian seasoning,” and/or oregano)
- pinch of cumin
- dash of cayenne
- one sprig of rosemary (or other herbs or just use the dried)
- one bone-in pork chop (or about six ounces of whatever meat you like, or no meat if you don't eat it—hearty mushrooms or tofu would work)
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup flour
- about 2 pounds russet potatoes
- 2 more tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup low-fat sour cream
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Thaw the veggies in the chicken broth, until they are warmed through and still have some texture (if possible). Drain the vegetables and set them aside, returning the broth to the pot.

Bring the broth to a boil; add herbs, cumin, and cayenne and reduce to a simmer, allowing the mixture to reduce slightly while you move on to the next step.

Peel and chop your potatoes. Place them in a pot with enough water to just cover them. Season liberally with salt and boil until a fork pierces them easily.

Chop your pork chop pretty finely and season with salt and pepper. Heat the 1/2 stick butter in a large skillet and saute the meat until brown, then remove it and set aside.

Add the flour to the butter in the skillet and make a roux, cooking for a minute or so until it smells nutty. Place a strainer over the skillet and pour in your broth, stirring vigorously to make a gravy. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Meanwhile, drain your potatoes. If your gravy needs thickening, set aside a cup or two of boiled potatoes to mash into it. Mash the remaining potatoes with the 2 tbsp butter and the sour cream, plus salt and pepper to taste. Stir in most of the shredded cheese, reserving some to sprinkle on top.

Stir the veggies and meat into the gravy, and pour the mixture into a 13" x 9" pan. Top with the mashed potatoes and cheese.

At this point you could bake it (350 for about an hour, until the cheese is melted and the gravy is bubbling) or put it on the grill like I did (medium heat for about 40 minutes, though it probably would have been fine after 30).