

FROM THE JPB CULINARY LABS



ASHEVILLE, NC

Lamb & Shiitake Mushroom Tatertot Casserole

Ingredients:

- 1 bag of frozen potato puffs/tatertots
- 1 lb. ground lamb
- 1 Tab. olive oil
- 3-4 oz. fresh shiitake mushrooms
- 1/3 c. chopped shallots (about 3-4 small)
- 1/2 Tab. chopped garlic
- 1/4 c. dry red wine
- 1 Tab. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tab. tomato paste
- 2 Tab. all-purpose flour
- 1 Tab. room temp. butter
- 1/2 Tab. fresh thyme leaves
- Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste



Optional: 4 dried shiitake mushrooms finely minced (soak in 1 c. boiling water for 30 minutes, strain and reserve the soaking liquid) – *you may skip this ingredient and substitute 1 C. of warm beef broth*

Directions:

Warm the olive oil over medium heat and sauté the chopped shallots for 1 minute. Add the fresh sliced shiitake mushrooms and continue sauteing for 3-4 minutes, or until the mushrooms have softened and the shallots turn translucent. Add the ground lamb and minced dried mushrooms, season with salt and pepper, and continue to cook on medium heat, breaking the meat into smaller chunks with a wooden spoon until there are no pink spots left (about 5 min). Add the chopped garlic and stir until





fragrant (about 1 min). Add the tomato paste and Worcestershire sauce, stir an additional 2 minutes or until the paste turns a deep brick-red. Deglaze the pan with the red wine, allow to simmer and evaporate (about 2 min). Sprinkle the flour over the lamb mixture and stir constantly, blending the flour into the meat completely, cooking out the raw flour taste (about 2 min). Slowly pour in the reserved 1 C. of warm mushroom liquor (or use 1 C. of warm beef broth) and stir constantly as the gravy comes together and returns to a boil. Allow to simmer 1-2 minutes to fully thicken, and finish the sauce off heat by stirring in the butter and thyme leaves, season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour the lamb mixture into a 2-quart casserole dish.

Preheat the oven to 425F. Keep the tots frozen until the oven has fully preheated and you're ready to assemble the casserole. You could place the frozen tots directly on the warm lamb and bake immediately as is traditional, but this will result in soggy bottoms! I recommend par-baking the tots at 425F for 10-15 minutes to start crisping all sides. A foil-lined tray is best as under-baked tots tend to stick to the pan. Neatly place the par-baked tots atop the lamb mixture and bake uncovered, for about 15 minutes, or until the gravy is bubbling and the tots are deliciously crispy and brown.

The perfect pair: Chateau Pas de l'Ane

A rich and full-bodied wine with aromas of berries, black fruits, tobacco, roasted coffee, and spicy and woody notes. On the palate it is well-balanced and velvety, with refined power coming from concentration rather than weight and sweetness. Rich blackberry fruit and layers of texture are a great combination for this wine that has profited from the quality of the Cabernet Franc in this vintage. It has plenty of fruit and acidity, as well as firm, still-toasty tannins that lend a hand extending the clean, floral finish. That this is composed of nearly 50% of some of the best Cabernet Franc in the world is vividly, startlingly evident from start to finish.

