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Indiana Venison and Beef Shepherd's Pie

Each year, ten couples from our neighborhood get together for a Wild Game Feast where the rule is "if you caught it, you cook it". The buffet table is loaded with entrees featuring venison, grouse, walleye, pheasant, duck, quail, goose, and other wild game. Desserts feature fruits from our gardens and homemade ice cream.

This year, we brought a shepherd's pie made with venison and local beef. If you are fresh out of venison, you can use all beef.

4 cups prepared mashed potatoes, warm
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large yellow onions, half inch dice
5 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 pound ground venison, prefer chili grind
2 pounds local beef, prefer chili grind
4 cups unseasoned tomato sauce
1/2 cup beef stock
1 tablespoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 cups frozen peas, thawed
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Heat the oil in a large deep skillet over medium high heat.

Add the onions and sweat them for about 5 minutes.

Add the garlic, venison, and beef.

Cook until the meat is no longer pink. Drain the accumulated fat from the pan and discard it.

Add the tomato sauce, beef stock, thyme, salt, and pepper.

Reduce the heat to medium low and cook the meat mixture, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes or until most of the liquid has evaporated and the mixture is very thick.

Add the peas and stir to evenly distribute them in the meat mixture.

Remove the meat mixture from the heat and pour it into a 13 x 9 inch baking dish.

Spread the warm mashed potatoes over the meat mixture. Sprinkle the cheese evenly over the potatoes.

Place the baking dish on a cookie sheet lined with foil (just in case it bubbles over) and bake for 15 minutes or until the filling begins to bubble and the cheese is a bit browned.

Serve immediately.

Serves 8.

Victoria Wesseler

*For more seasonal recipes and information about Indiana local food,
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