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THE  
FOOD  
OF  
ARGENTINA

ASADO, EMPANADAS  
DULCE DE LECHE & MORE

# PASTEL DE PAPA

## *Argentine beef shepherd's pie*

SERVES 8–10

2 tablespoons olive oil  
200 g (7 oz) fresh chorizo, diced  
1 brown onion, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 carrot, finely chopped  
1 celery stalk, finely chopped  
1 small red capsicum (bell pepper), diced  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
1 tablespoon sweet paprika  
2 teaspoons dried oregano  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
500 g (1 lb 2 oz) minced (ground) beef  
2 tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour  
375 ml (12½ fl oz/1½ cups) beef stock  
2 tablespoons tomato sauce (ketchup)  
freshly ground black pepper, to serve

### MASHED POTATO TOPPING

1 kg (2 lb 3 oz) floury potatoes, peeled and chopped into large chunks  
sea salt  
100 g (3½ oz) butter  
125 ml (4 fl oz/½ cup) full-cream (whole) milk  
2 egg yolks, beaten

This Argentine version of shepherd's pie was probably introduced by the English or the Welsh. Many Welsh immigrants settled in the Chubut Province of Patagonia during the 1860s and today there is still a prominent Welsh community there. This dish also takes on a political edge in some circles as it's said to have been Juan Domingo Perón's favourite meal. Some go as far as to call it a Perónist food due to its connection to the general and the symbolic combination of meat (capitalism) and potatoes (labour). Perhaps it's a long bow, but tread carefully with this information – political discussions can last all night in Argentina!

Pastel de papa is always made with beef and often hardboiled eggs or olives are added. The addition of chorizo here is not traditional, but it gives the meat a smoky boost.

To make the mashed potato topping, place the potato in a large saucepan, cover with cold water and add a generous pinch of salt. Bring to the boil and cook for 15–20 minutes, until tender. Drain well, then tip the potato back into the pan and add the butter, milk and 1 teaspoon of sea salt. Mash until well combined, then use a wooden spoon to beat the potato until it is completely smooth. Pour in the beaten egg yolks and continue to beat until well combined and silky. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over high heat. Add the chorizo and sauté for 2–3 minutes, until the colour from the chorizo leaches out into the oil. Add the onion and sauté for 2 minutes, then add the garlic, carrot, celery and capsicum and cook for 4–5 minutes, until the vegetables have softened. Stir through the cumin, paprika, oregano and salt and cook for 2–3 minutes, until the spices become aromatic. Add the mince and cook, breaking up any large pieces with a wooden spoon, for 8–10 minutes, until browned. Sprinkle the flour over the mince, stir to combine and cook for 1 minute, allowing the flour to absorb any excess liquid in the pan. Pour in the stock and tomato sauce and stir well to remove any stuck-on bits on the bottom of the pan. Bring the mixture to the boil and cook for 4–5 minutes, until slightly thickened. Transfer to a 3 litre (101 fl oz/12 cup) capacity baking dish.

Top with the mashed potato and smooth the surface. Transfer to the oven and bake for 45 minutes, until the top is golden brown and bubbling. Serve hot with freshly ground black pepper.



