

Entire meal, one pot

By DANIEL NEMAN

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

I was about halfway through making a one-pot meal of shepherd’s pie when I suddenly realized that my one-pot meal required the use of three pots.

This was a problem, because I was writing a story — this story — about one-pot meals. But I learned something from the experience. I learned that people who write about food sometimes are not very good at math, such as counting to three.

And it’s not like the recipe came from an unreliable source. I don’t want to name names, but the website that touted shepherd’s pie as a one-pot recipe rhymes with “Nood Fetwork.”

I finished making the shepherd’s pie anyway, because I like shepherd’s pie, and it was fabulous. Maybe I’ll write about it some day, when I write about three-pot meals.

But today’s story, as we have established, is about one-pot meals. These are meals that are made entirely in a single pot, which cuts down considerably on what I consider the monstrous chore of having to clean up after cooking dinner.

That is one advantage to one-pot meals. Another is that they are often quite good, presumably because the flavors blend organically together. Sometimes they are even better than quite good. And occasionally they are absolutely spectacular.

The three remaining dishes I made this week are among the best things I have cooked all year. Four, if you count the shepherd’s pie.

I began with beef goulash, largely because of the scene in “Christmas in Connecticut” in which S.Z. Sakall turns Una O’Connor’s Irish stew into goulash by adding half a can of paprika. But even Sakall’s goulash could not have been as rich and satisfying as the one I made.

You begin with chuck roast — I used the less-tender top round, because the price of beef has skyrocketed — that braises for about three hours in a

robust sauce. It’s the sauce that makes the dish so memorable; it’s made from roasted red peppers, more onions than you would imagine, carrots, tomato paste, vinegar and nearly as much paprika as Sakall used.

It all comes together in an aromatic, deep red stew. It’s a stick-to-your-ribs kind of meal, comforting as well as filling.

Traditionally, it’s served on a bed of egg noodles. I recommend serving it on a bed of egg noodles. The cookbook from which I got the recipe shows a picture of it served on a bed of egg noodles.

But egg noodles require a second pot. People who write about food sometimes are not very good at math.

Next, I made a dish that genuinely does cook in just a single pot. It’s a chicken pot pie, but it’s different from any chicken pot pie I’ve ever had.

Instead of the usual velouté sauce (a light roux mixed with chicken stock) blended with mixed vegetables, chicken and cream, the filling of this pot pie takes a more flavorful route.

It starts with spinach, which is made creamy by the addition of Boursin cheese; that’s the familiar soft, white, spreadable cheese with garlic and fine herbs. Artichoke hearts are added, along with capers, chicken and lemon zest, which brings a wonderful brightness to the whole dish.

And it also has chicken stock and a little flour — but not made into a roux — cream and mixed vegetables, because some traditions are worth keeping.

Naturally, it’s topped with a lovely and tempting round of puff pastry. There are not many things in life that cannot be improved with a little puff pastry.

My final dish is wonderful for brunch, simple and impressive, though it does take some time to make.

At its heart, fried eggs with Parmesan and potato roesti is just hash browns (the shredded, fried kind) topped with sunny side-up eggs and a hearty sprinkling of salty Parmesan cheese. What could be

better than that?

Roesti is the Swiss version of a potato pancake. The potatoes are shredded lengthwise and fried in butter in a single layer all the way across the pan. That way, you end up with a single, 12-inch potato pancake or hash brown.

Once the roesti is placed on a platter, the same skillet is used to fry all the eggs at the same time. They, too, cover the entire bottom of the pan, and they slide out and onto the potatoes as a single unit.

It’s fun to make, and it’s heavenly to eat. Make sure you keep the yolks runny, so they infuse the potato pancake with their golden goodness.

BEEF GOULASH

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

4 pounds boneless beef chuck-eye roast, pulled apart at seams, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
2 teaspoons table salt, divided
1 (12-ounce) jar roasted red peppers, rinsed
1/3 cup sweet paprika
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar, divided
3 pounds onions, chopped fine
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
4 carrots, peeled and sliced 1-inch thick
1 bay leaf
1 cup beef broth, if necessary, plus extra as needed
1 (12-ounce) package egg noodles, optional

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Sprinkle beef with 1 teaspoon salt. Process red peppers, paprika, tomato paste and 2 teaspoons of the vinegar in food processor until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes, scraping down sides of bowl as needed.
2. Combine onions, oil and remaining 1 teaspoon salt in Dutch oven. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onions soften but have not yet begun to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. (If onions begin to brown, reduce heat to medium-low and stir in 1 tablespoon water.)
3. Stir in pepper mixture and cook, uncovered, until onions begin to stick to bottom of pot, about 2 minutes. Stir in beef, carrots and bay leaf and use rubber spatula to scrape down sides of pot. Cover, transfer to oven and cook until beef is almost tender



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Beef Goulash, a dish made in one pot.

and surface of liquid is ½ inch below top of meat, 2 to 2 ½ hours, stirring every 30 minutes.

4. Stir in broth, if needed, until surface of liquid measures ¼ inch from top of meat (beef should not be fully submerged). Cover and continue to cook until beef is tender, about 30 minutes.

5. Remove pot from oven and discard bay leaf. Using wide, shallow spoon, skim excess fat from surface of stew. Adjust consistency with more hot broth as needed. Stir in remaining 1 teaspoon vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste.

6. If desired, prepare noodles according to package directions and serve goulash over noodles. Per serving (based on 6): 583 calories; 23 g fat; 9 g saturated fat; 224 mg cholesterol; 66 g protein; 34 g carbohydrate; 15 g sugar; 7 g fiber; 1,282 mg sodium; 142 mg calcium

Slightly adapted from “The Complete One Pot” by America’s Test Kitchen

EASY CHICKEN, SPINACH AND ARTICHOKE POT PIE

Yield: 4 servings

1 1/4 pounds (20 ounces) frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
1 (5.2-ounce) package Boursin Garlic & Fine Herbs cheese
1 cup jarred or canned whole artichoke hearts packed

in water, halved
2 carrots, peeled and shredded
3/4 cup chicken broth
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup capers, rinsed
1 tablespoon Wondra flour, see note
12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed and sliced thin
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
1/8 teaspoon table salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 (9 1/2-by-9-inch) sheet puff pastry, thawed
1 large egg, lightly beaten with 2 tablespoons water
Note: Wondra is a brand of instant flour that has been finely ground, cooked and dried. It prevents sauces from clumping. You can substitute ordinary all-purpose flour for the Wondra; the taste will be the same but the sauce will have a pasty, slightly gritty texture.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Grease 8-by-8-inch baking dish or 9-inch skillet. Combine spinach, Boursin, artichokes, carrots, broth, cream, capers and Wondra together in a bowl, then transfer to prepared dish or pan.
2. Toss chicken with lemon zest, salt and pepper and spread in even layer over the spinach mixture. Cut puff pastry to fit over dish or pan and place over top of chicken. Cut 4 (2-inch) slits in center of dough, then brush dough with egg mixture.
3. Bake until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbling,

30 to 35 minutes, rotating dish halfway through baking. Remove pot pie from oven and let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Per serving: 635 calories; 34 g fat; 8 g saturated fat; 128 mg cholesterol; 34 g protein; 51 g carbohydrate; 4 g sugar; 10 g fiber; 1,244 mg sodium; 258 mg calcium

Recipe from “The Complete One Pot” by America’s Test Kitchen

FRIED EGGS WITH PARMESAN AND POTATO ROESTI

Yield: 4 servings

2 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and shredded, see note
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 1/4 teaspoons table salt, divided
1/8 teaspoon plus 1/8 teaspoon pepper, divided
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
8 large eggs
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (1/2 cup)
Note: For best result, use the large holes of a box grater to grate the potatoes and grate them lengthwise into long shreds.

1. Place potatoes in a large bowl and fill with cold water.

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Exploring history of the Anson Building



GINNY MAMMEN
OUT AND ABOUT

The last building on this block of downtown La Grande is 1216 Adams Ave., currently the home of Bella Mercantile. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the “Anson Building, most likely built by Henry Anson around 1892.”

We know from a Sanborn map there was a general store located there in 1893. The 1893 City Directory tells us that Erwin S. Coy was the proprietor. His stock included table linens, clothing and other dry goods. Times were tough, however, and in 1902 Erwin went bankrupt. W. A. Messner, a grocer from across the street, bought Coy’s stock in March of that year and moved his grocery stock to the new location.

But it appears that Messner was not really ready to settle down in La Grande. That same month an article appeared in The Observer telling that he had sold his business to three men from Nebraska.

By March 31, 1903, it was reported that “A former La Grande Man Retains His Reputation as a Hustler.” It seems that Messner had moved to Independence, Oregon, near Salem, and purchased a store there.

The next proprietor located at 1216 Adams was Charles Clyde Pennington, who operated a men’s clothing store at this location in the early 1900s. In 1910 Frank Toney and Claude Scranton purchased the business from Pennington. By November of 1912 the business of Toney and Scranton was dissolved when Toney, a well-known haberdasher, moved to the Sommer Hotel building.

Scranton found a new partner in Harris French, a young man previously working for a competitor. In December of 1912 the business of French and Scranton was created. They advertised they would be selling the same quality brands of men’s clothing that had been sold by C. C. Pennington. Selling men’s clothing for a living just wasn’t what French wanted to do, so in January 1919 he left the business and started raising sheep.

French and Scranton didn’t appear often in the newspaper, but occasionally through the years they were mentioned, but not always in ways they would have wanted. For example, in 1913, shortly after the Scrantons had moved into a new house on the corner of Second and Spring, Mrs. Scranton was getting ready to attend the Cherry Fair and left the iron which she had been using on the ironing table in her parlor. The iron had not been properly turned off and when they returned later that evening they found the ironing table and much of the furniture in the room destroyed by fire, plus there was a hole in the floor.

Then in July of 1918 there was a large notice in The Observer chastising the business for being open “before, during and after the parade” on the Fourth. Just the year before, in November, Mrs. French attempted to back her “large seven-passenger car” away from the curb, but forgot to put the car in reverse. As a result she had not only car damage, but also a broken store window at her husband’s business

and a report of the whole thing in the paper.

One thing has to be said about Claude Scranton: he didn’t give up. After French left he took on a new partner named Short in October 1923 and they held a “reorganization sale.” Unfortunately this business lasted only a year and in October of 1924 they had a “bankrupt sale.”

In February 1925 it was announced that the New York Store, a chain store which originally started in Idaho, had purchased the stock of Scranton and Short and would soon be moving into the building at the corner of Elm and Adams. This store started out primarily selling men’s and boys’ clothing but later added clothing for the whole family. New York Store was in business until the mid 1930s.

Whether it was the size or the location of this building, it seemed to draw businesses that sold clothing. Sometimes it was for men, sometimes for women and sometimes for the whole family.

Ann Johnson had a women’s clothing shop here from 1935 until 1938 when



Fred Hill Collection

The New York Store, a chain, operated at 1216 Adams Ave. in La Grande from 1925 into the mid 1930s.

it became the home of Western Frock Shop. The Rosanna Shop moved in October 1941 and stayed for 20 years.

The person involved with this building having the most interesting history was Charles Clyde Pennington. He was born to Stewart McKindra Pennington and his wife, Abigail, in Oregon in 1855. Stewart was born in Kentucky, but later came across the plains in 1847 to Oregon with four other people. He worked in a variety of jobs including mining in California until 1850. He then settled on a farm near Albany until 1871 when he moved to Pendleton working in the stock business. He served the Oregon State Senate twice.

C. C. was restless like his father. He moved with his wife Hanna and their four children to Union County in 1881, where he farmed for a period of time. Sometime in the early 1900s he opened a clothing store which he later sold to Toney and Scranton in 1910. During that time he was elected sheriff for two terms. He also served as director, vice president and president of the La Grande National Bank. Charles Clyde Pennington died in April 1927 at the age of 72. Keep looking up! Enjoy!

Ginny Mammen has lived in La Grande for more than 50 years and enjoys sharing her interest in the history of people, places and buildings.