



Recipe 11.5.2023

Platonic Ideal Mashed Potatoes

8-10 Servings



Full transparency here: I like my potatoes fluid, and I will drag a turkey wing through them on the way to my mouth. In my book, if you can serve mashed potatoes with an ice cream scoop, you've got a problem. Mashed potatoes are personal, something I learned by being yelled at by dozens of people who prefer their potatoes a different way. If you would like a sturdier result, cut the dairy by about one third. Please don't holler at me. If desired, you can finish the potatoes with some prepared horseradish or a spoonful of sour cream for a little extra tang.

Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups whole milk
- 2 sticks unsalted butter (1 cup, 8 ounces)
- 6 sprigs thyme
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 head of garlic
- 3 pounds Idaho (russet) potatoes, scrubbed (unpeeled)

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Pour milk into a medium saucepan and add butter, thyme, 12 grinds of pepper, and 2 teaspoons salt. Cut the garlic in half crosswise and add to the milk mixture. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Immediately remove from heat, cover, and let sit at least 30 minutes to let flavors infuse.

Get ahead: Milk mixture can be made up to 2 days ahead. After steeping, let it cool completely, then cover and chill. Reheat before proceeding.

In the meantime, place the potatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet and roast, turning halfway through, until completely tender, 40 to 45 minutes.

When potatoes are done, cut in half lengthwise (it's important to do this while the potatoes are very hot or the texture of the mash will be irretrievably gummy). Working with one half at a time and holding the potato in your non-dominant hand with a kitchen towel or oven mitt, use a large spoon to scoop out the potato flesh and transfer them to a food mill fitted with the fine disk or a ricer. Pass the potatoes directly into a Dutch oven or other heavy-bottomed pot. (Or, scoop them right into the Dutch oven if you are going to use a potato masher.)

Strain the milk mixture over the potatoes. If desired, fish out the garlic halves and squeeze the cloves into the potatoes.

Set potato mixture over medium heat and mix thoroughly and continuously until liquid is incorporated and potatoes are very smooth and bubbling, 5 to 7 minutes. I like to use a silicone spatula and really smack them around, but a wooden spoon will do the trick. Taste mashed potatoes and season with more salt and pepper, if needed. Cover and keep warm (off heat) until ready to serve.

Get Ahead: Potatoes can be made 2 days ahead. Transfer to an airtight container and let cool. Cover and chill. Reheat over medium, whisking constantly and loosening with water or more milk if needed.

From the Market	At Home
<p>Russet potatoes</p> <p>Thyme</p>	<p>Milk</p> <p>Butter</p> <p>Salt and pepper</p> <p>Garlic</p>
Spin It	Spin It
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub German butterballs for russet potatoes • Use a handful of chives or a bunch of scallions, cut in half lengthwise, instead of thyme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non dairy milk if you prefer, but don't let it come to a simmer or it will split. Warm gently with the aromatics • Use vegan butter if preferred (see above) • Sub buttermilk or sour cream for part or all of the whole milk