

Fresh Mashed Potatoes: Quick & Easy



TIPS:

1. Mashed potatoes are much easier to make than they look. To ensure the best possible flavor and consistency, I suggest making fresh mashed potatoes right before serving them. (Click, paste or type the following link in your web browser to view a **short video** showing how to make these mashed potatoes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLvQenlXVI>.)
2. The mashed potatoes shown in the picture above were made with the skins peeled from the potatoes before cooking. This recipe will show how to use either peeled potatoes or potatoes with the skin left on and cleaned easily using an abrasive sponge. Leaving the skin on the potatoes not only adds flavor to the mashed potatoes but also preserves most of the rich nutrients that are present both in the potato skin and just below the surface of the skin.
3. This recipe also allows the choice between using evaporated milk or heavy cream when adding a flavorfully creamy consistency to the potatoes after mashing. Evaporated milk contains less than half the calories and 1/5th the fat of heavy cream, though I've found that both evaporated milk and heavy cream have similar cooking and flavor properties, especially when used in a recipe like this.

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes

Total Cooking Time: 20-25 minutes

Ingredients

(for 6-8 people)

4 Idaho (or Russet) Potatoes

Evaporated Milk or Heavy Cream

Butter or Margarine

Salt

Ground Black Pepper

Ground Nutmeg (optional, but adds a festive flavor)



Equipment

Medium Sized Pot

Abrasive Sponge (if you're not peeling the potatoes)

Vegetable Peeler (if you want peeled potatoes)

Sharp Knife

Cutting Board

Colander

Potato Masher (can be substituted with a big spoon)

Can Opener

Potholders or Folded Dish Towels

Big Spoon

Timer



1. Either use an abrasive sponge (or brush or bare hands) to scrub the **potato skins** clean under running tap water (to retain the **nutrients** present both in the **skin** or just below the surface of the **potato skin**) and skip to step 2, or...



...use a vegetable peeler to remove the **potato skins**, and then...



...rinse any **loose grit** from the **freshly peeled potato** with cold tap water.



2. Cut the **potatoes** (whether they're prepared with the skin on or peeled), in half lengthwise.



Cut each **potato half** into lengthwise strips about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide,...



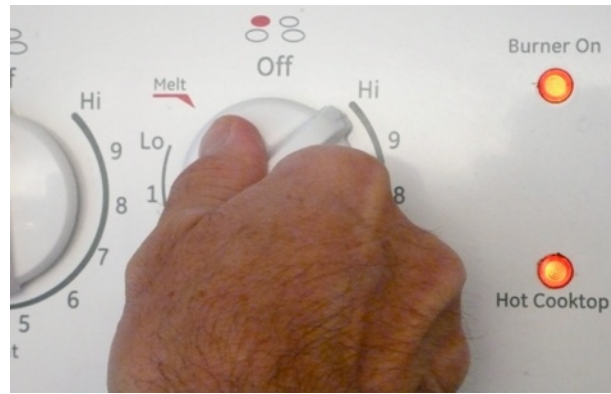
...then cut the strips in cross section into cubes also about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide.



3. Put the **potatoes** into a medium sized pot and add cold tap water until the **potatoes** are just covered with water.



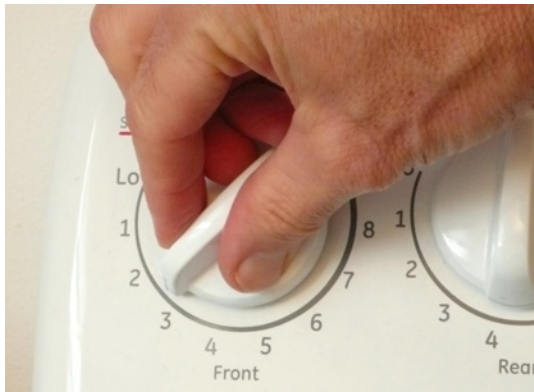
Put the pot on the stove, and turn on the burner to HIGH heat.



4. As soon as the water comes to a rapid, big bubble boil as shown below,...



...turn down the burner heat to LOW-MEDIUM to keep the water from boiling over, and set a timer for 15 minutes.



5. When the timer sounds, check the **potatoes** for doneness by driving the tip of a sharp knife into one of the **thickest potato pieces** in the pot. **Potatoes** are properly cooked when they are soft throughout. If your **potato pieces** are still firm in the middle, keep cooking until they have softened without letting them cook so much that they fall apart on their own.



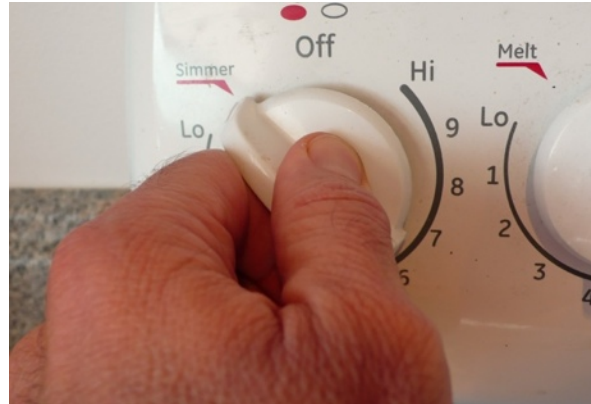
6. When the **potatoes** are done, use potholders to lift the pot, and...



...pour the **potatoes** into a colander in the sink to let them drain.



7. Put the pot back on the stove, turn down the burner heat to **LOW**, and...



...use the **butter or margarine** wrapper as a guide to add **4 tablespoons of butter or margarine** to the pot (*4 tablespoons is usually half a stick of butter or margarine as shown in the top left photo below*).



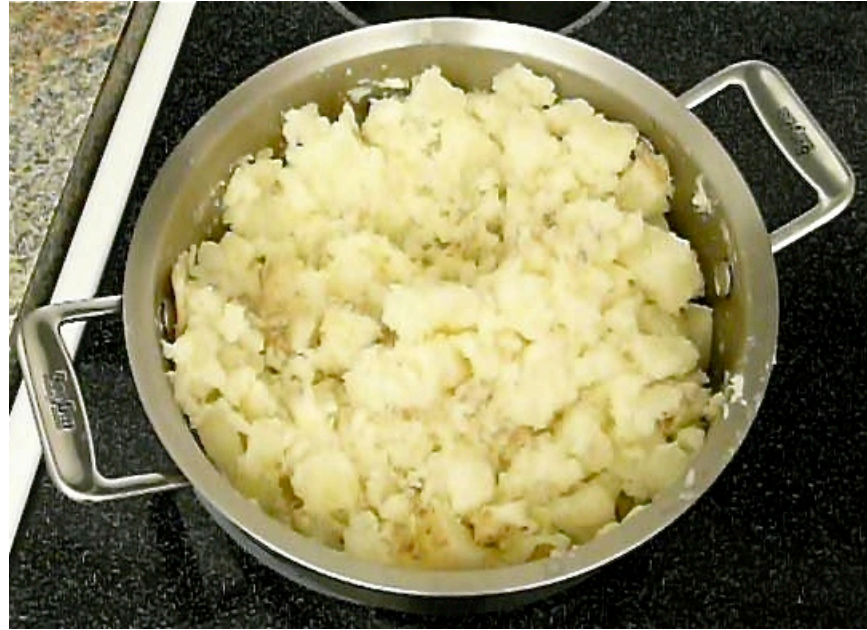
8. Pour the **cooked potatoes** from the colander into the pot as the **butter or margarine** melts, and...



...mash the **potatoes** using either a potato masher (top left photo below) or big spoon (bottom right photo below) until they look like...



...this.



9. This step has to be done by feel – *but it's easy* – because it all depends on the **cooked potato moisture content** and personal preference. Start off by adding a good shot of either **evaporated milk** (top left photo) or **heavy cream** (bottom right photo).



Stir with a big spoon, and...



...keep adding and mixing in small amounts of either **evaporated milk** or **heavy cream** until the **mashed potatoes** are smooth, not lumpy, and moist but still firm in consistency as shown here.



10. To accommodate individual tastes, I recommend seasoning the **mashed potatoes** mildly in the pot - more **seasoning** can always be added at the table to taste - with:

A good dash of salt



A crunch of ground black pepper



An optional shake of ground nutmeg



11. Finish by scooping the **mashed potatoes** into a serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.



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