



“How To” Prepare Perfect Mashed Potatoes

There are some basic “must do’s” in order to prepare perfectly mashed potatoes. When ordering spuds, be certain to specify Idaho. Idaho’s climate and rich, volcanic soil consistently yield potatoes with a high solids content (more potato and less water), which is ideal for making mashed potatoes.

Gather the Ingredients

A good, standard ratio of ingredients for making mashed Idaho® potatoes is the following:

5 pounds of Idaho® potatoes
1/4 - 1/2 cup of butter (room temperature)
Minimum of 1 1/2 cups milk (heated)

Prep the Potatoes

Making mashed potatoes is really a simple process. To begin, peel the potatoes and then cut into a uniform dice so they cook evenly.

Next step includes heating the potatoes. You can do this one of two ways -- either by steaming or boiling. If you choose the steaming process, place the cut potatoes in a perforated hotel pan and cook in a steamer for approximately 15 minutes. If you opt to boil the potatoes, simply place them in a pot, cover with water and bring to a full boil. Continue cooking potatoes in boiling water for about 20 minutes.

The potatoes are done when they are easily pierced with a knife or fork or can be mashed effortlessly with the back of a spatula.

Tip: To save time and labor, you may decide not to peel the potatoes but prep with the skin on. Keeping the skin on adds texture and color to the dish as well as a dose of nutrients.

Drier is Better

Did you know that water is the enemy of perfectly mashed potatoes? After steaming or boiling the potatoes, place them in a colander to drain -- making certain they are very dry.

Tip: To ensure the driest potatoes possible, place them in a single layer on sheet pan and put in a 300° F oven for 10 minutes or until very dry to the touch.

HOT Potatoes!

Always keep the potatoes hot. Use heated milk and room temperature butter. If all of the ingredients are at the proper temperature, you can be certain the mashed potatoes will be delicious.

With regard to serving fresh mashed potatoes, they can be held for an hour on a steam table or in a warming cabinet.

If potatoes are held too long, they will oxidize and turn grey, which may affect their taste.

Tip: If you think you will need to hold the mashed potatoes for longer than an hour, add more moisture to them.

Let the Mixing Begin

Place the cooked, very dry potatoes in a mixer equipped with a paddle attachment and add the room temperature butter. Turn the mixer on low and slowly pour in about a third of the hot milk. Increase the mixer speed and continue to add the hot milk until a velvety consistency is achieved. Then, season with salt and pepper.

Be careful not to over mix the potatoes. If they are over mixed, they will become gummy and sticky.

Tip: To get an even richer, creamier mashed potato - in the classic French style - just add a bit more butter, milk or even cream.

Experiment like an Expert

Part of the challenge and the fun is figuring out how to achieve the best mashed potatoes possible! Another guarantee to achieving silky spuds is to use a tamis or a food mill fit with a fine attachment. A ricer is another tried and true tool of the trade. Test a couple of different methods to determine which delivers the desired results.

Time Saving Tuber Tips

Over the last few years, the quality of both processed and frozen mashed Idaho® potatoes have improved immensely. Their flavor, texture and consistent performance rival fresh Idaho® potatoes! Simply, read and follow the manufacturer's directions carefully.

Spud Stumped? Ask Dr. Potato...

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