

DECEMBER



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Loaded Mashed Potato Casserole

Ingredients:

- 5 lbs russet potatoes
- 8 ounces cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/2 cup butter (1 stick), cut in 1/2-inch cubes, plus more for greasing the baking dish
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 1/2 pound bacon, sliced crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 bunch chives, sliced
- kosher salt and freshly ground pepper



Directions:

1. Peel the potatoes and cut them into roughly 1-inch cubes. Put the potato cubes into a large pot and cover them by about 2 inches with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, and continue to boil until the potatoes are fork tender (the potatoes should mash easily when you press one of them with the back of a fork), 30-40 minutes.
2. While the potatoes are cooking, preheat your oven to 350°F and grease a 9 x 13 baking dish with butter.
3. Grate your cheddar cheese with a cheese Microplane or box grater, then divided your grated cheese in half. Half will get mixed into the mashed potatoes, the other half will go on top of the casserole.
4. In a medium skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until most of the fat has rendered out and it's starting to crisp 7-10 minutes. When the bacon is cooked transfer it to a paper towel-lined plate, to drain any excess grease.
5. Once the potatoes are cooked, remove the pot from the heat, drain the potatoes into a colander, then put the drained potatoes back into the empty pot. Add the butter, sour cream, a tablespoon of kosher salt, and some freshly ground pepper. Mash your potatoes with a potato masher or large wooden spoon. It's OK if there are still a few chunks, as long as everything is combined and the butter is completely melted.
6. Set aside about two tablespoons of bacon and two teaspoons of sliced chives for garnish, then add the rest of the bacon and chives to the mashed potatoes along with half of the grated cheese. Mix with a wooden spoon just until everything is combined.
7. Spread the mashed potatoes into the greased baking dish, and sprinkle the remaining cheddar cheese on top. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until the cheese is melted and the potatoes are piping hot.
8. To serve, garnish with the remaining chives and bacon. Source: Buzzfeed.com

Thought of the Day

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition."

- Steve Jobs

Worried About Family Disagreements This Holiday Season? Keep These Conflict Resolution Principles in Mind

Are you planning to see family members this holiday season? Keep the following principles from psychologists and conflict resolution experts in mind if tension surfaces among your relatives or in any other relationships you have throughout the year:

- Search for the why. When someone is argumentative or you find their behavior highly frustrating, it can be tempting to dismiss them and shut down the possibility of a dialogue. However, by seeking to understand their position and why they feel the way they do, you will feel more in control of the situation and the other person may begin to adopt a more cooperative approach.
- If an argument arises, only discuss the topic at hand. One of the most common reasons that minor disagreements erupt into full-blown fights is that the parties involved bring up past offenses, which are often tainting their view of the current situation. Even if you are harboring old hurts, resolve to focus only on the issue presently being discussed.
- Distinguish between true relationship problems and mere differences. In relationships between spouses, siblings, parents and kids, and more, simple personality differences may sometimes cause tension and masquerade as serious rifts. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between issues that can and should be solved and those in which it would be best for the parties to simply agree to disagree.
- If an argument is heating up, count to 50 before saying anything inflammatory. There are times when even adults would benefit from a time-out and a disagreement where you are tempted to make a comment motivated by hurt or anger is one of them. Source: [Dr. Oz](http://Dr.Oz)

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