



Gourmet Mashed Potatoes

These aren't your grandma's mashed potatoes. Topped with smoked bacon and shredded cheese—wow! These have become a massive hit at our annual Turkey Fest. And the best part? The hard work can all be done the day before!

Serves about 12 adults.

Preferred Smoking Fuel

- Cherry

Ingredients

- 8 medium potatoes, peeled
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 ounces cream cheese
- ¾ stick salted butter
- 1½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 pound bacon
- ½ pound shredded cheese
- Chives

Instructions

1. Put the bacon in a pan or on a baking sheet and bake or smoke at 275° until crisp (60–90 minutes), then very coarsely dice the bacon.
2. Preheat your oven or smoker temperature to 350°.
3. Put the potatoes in a pot and add water to cover. Here's an old trick that really works to keep the starchy foam from boiling over: lay a wooden spoon across one side of the top of the pot, then set the lid on the pot. Resting the lid on the spoon will slightly vent the pot, and as the foam hits the spoon, the bubbles will fade down or burst.
4. On your stovetop, cook the potatoes at high heat until the water begins to boil, then reduce the heat to medium and continue cooking until the potatoes are very soft. This will be about forty-five minutes total cooking time.
5. Using a masher or a food processor, mash the potatoes until there are no large lumps.
6. Using a mixer, beat in the butter, cream cheese, sour cream, salt, and pepper, one ingredient at a time, adding the next ingredient only after the previous one is combined well.
7. Add the milk half a cup at a time and beat until you achieve a smooth, pudding-like texture.
8. Pour the mashed potatoes into a pan.
9. Top the mashed potatoes with the cheese, then the bacon. Finally, dust with the chives.
10. Cover the pan with foil, then cook the potatoes until they are hot throughout and the cheese is nicely melted, about 30–40 minutes. If you're using a smoker, cook the potatoes uncovered for the first 15–20 minutes so the cheese picks up some smoke flavor.
11. Enjoy; gravy strictly optional.
12. Store any leftovers in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to five days.

This can easily be prepped the day before as follows:

- Add additional milk in step 7—about 1/4 cup at a time until you achieve a texture that is almost runny.
- After pouring the potatoes into the pan, let them cool on the counter, then cover and refrigerate them.
- Add the cheese, bacon, and chives just before reheating the potatoes.
- Since the potatoes will be completely cold before reheating in the oven or smoker, your cooking time will be extended to about ninety minutes.

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