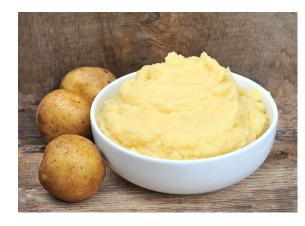
Mashed Potatoes

2 1/2 pounds potatoes (about 6 medium), peeled and cut into quarters

4 tablespoons butter or to taste

½ cup milk or potato-cooking water

salt and pepper to taste



- 1. Place the potatoes in a large saucepan and add water to cover them by at least 1 inch (2.5 cm). Bring to a boil over high heat. Add salt.
- 2. Lower the heat and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes, until the potatoes are soft.
- 3. Meanwhile, heat the butter and milk together in a small saucepan until the butter is melted; do not let the mixture boil. Set it aside.
- 4. Place a large colander in the sink. Very carefully carry the potato pot to the sink and slowly pour the water and potatoes into the colander and let the potatoes drain.
- 5. Return the potatoes to the pot over low heat. Using a potato masher, mash the potatoes until smooth. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix well. Add more salt if necessary. Serve hot.
 - If you want the mashed potatoes creamier, add a little more milk.
 - You can also use the water the potatoes boiled in instead of milk.

Variations

- 1. Substitute extra-virgin olive oil for the butter.
- 2. Cook other root vegetables separately (carrots, celery root, turnips, or parsnips), and mash them with the potatoes.
- 3. Form cold leftover mashed potatoes into patties and pan-fry them the next morning to eat with eggs.
- 4. For smooth mashed potatoes, beat them with a handheld electric mixer until fluffy.

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