

Potato Purée

Ingredients:

2 pounds baking potatoes, such as Idaho Russets
¾ - 1¼ c whole milk
1 c unsalted butter, chilled and cut into pieces
sea salt to taste

Directions:

Scrub the potatoes but do not peel them. Place the potatoes in a large pot; add enough salted water (1 tbsp of salt per quart of water) to cover by at least 1 inch. Simmer uncovered, over moderate heat until a knife inserted into a potato comes away easily, 20 to 30 minutes. Drain the potatoes as soon as they are cooked. If they are allowed to cool in the water, the potatoes will taste reheated.

Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, bring the milk just to a boil over high heat. Set aside.

As soon as the potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel them. Pass the potatoes through the finest grid of a food mill into a large heavy-bottomed saucepan set over low heat. With a wooden spatula, stir the potatoes vigorously to dry them, 4 to 5 minutes. Now begin adding about 12 tbsp of the butter, little by little, stirring vigorously until each batch of butter is thoroughly incorporated; the mixture should be fluffy and light. Slowly add about three fourths of the hot milk in a thin stream, stirring vigorously until the milk is thoroughly incorporated.

Pass the mixture through a fine mesh drum or sieve, into another heavy bottomed saucepan. Stir vigorously, and if the puree seems a bit heavy and stiff, add more butter and milk, stirring constantly.

Note: Few of us have a real French flat bottomed screen for scraping potato purée. Simply use any mesh sieve you have and press down on the potato purée as you push it through the sieve. This second step of puréeing is the true secret to a great potato purée.

Taste for seasoning. The purée may be made up to 1 hour in advance. Place in the top of a double boiler, uncovered, over simmering water. Stir occasionally to keep smooth.