

How to Cook Potatoes: 4 Easy Methods

Potatoes are forgiving once you know what result each method is designed to give you. This guide keeps the four basic methods together so you can choose the one you need.

PREP 5–15 MIN • COOK 10–60 MIN, BY METHOD • SERVINGS VARIES BY METHOD • LEVEL EASY

Before You Start

Boiled potatoes can be cooked ahead for later roasting or mashing. Mashed potatoes can be made ahead and gently reheated with a splash of milk and a little butter.

What You Need

Baked	Whole russet potatoes; olive oil and kosher salt, optional
Roasted	1 lb potatoes, cut evenly; 1 tbsp olive oil; salt and pepper
Boiled	Potatoes, whole or evenly cut; cold water; salt
Mashed	2 lb potatoes; 8 tbsp (1 stick) butter; about 1/2 cup warm milk or cream; salt and pepper

Baked *45–60 min*



1. Heat oven to 425°F.
2. Scrub and dry the potatoes, prick with a fork, and optionally rub lightly with oil and salt.
3. Bake directly on the rack or on a sheet pan for about 45–60 minutes, until a knife slides easily into the center.

Roasted *25–35 min*



1. Heat oven to 425°F.
2. Cut potatoes evenly and dry well.
3. Toss 1 lb with 1 tbsp oil plus salt and pepper, and spread in a single uncrowded layer.
4. Roast about 25–35 minutes, turning once, until browned outside and tender inside.

Boiled *10–20 min*



1. Put whole or evenly cut potatoes in a pot and cover with cold salted water by about 1 inch.
2. Bring to a boil, then lower to a steady simmer.
3. Cook about 10–20 minutes depending on size, until a fork or knife enters easily.
4. Drain well.

Mashed



1. Peel if desired and cut 2 lb potatoes evenly.
2. Boil until very tender and drain well.
3. Let excess moisture evaporate briefly.
4. Mash with 8 tbsp (1 stick) butter and about 1/2 cup warm milk or cream, adding it gradually.
5. Season to taste.

Tips

- For crisp roasted potatoes, dry the cut surfaces and do not crowd the pan.
- For mashed potatoes, stop mixing once they are smooth enough. Overworking can make them gluey.
- For boiling, start in cold water so the centers and outsides cook more evenly.
- Pick the method by the meal: baked for an easy side, roasted for crisp edges, boiled for potato salad, mashed for comfort food. Cut pieces the same size so they finish together.

Jane’s Note

Leftover baked potatoes make a great start for potato soup. Use them in my Loaded Baked Potato Soup for an easy, cozy meal the next day.

Storage

Cool cooked potatoes promptly and refrigerate in a covered container. Reheat until hot throughout.

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