

Best Mashed Potatoes

4 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, cut into 2" pieces
1 tbs. Kosher salt, plus more to taste
1½ cups whole milk
3 sprigs thyme, plus more for garnish
2 bay leaves
¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, plus more for serving
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Place potatoes in a large stockpot and cover with cold water up to 1" above potatoes. Add 1 tbs. salt, cover, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to a simmer, (about medium-low), remove cover, and cook until potatoes are fork tender but not crumbling apart (about 20–25 minutes).

Reserve 1/2 cup starchy cooking liquid*. Drain potatoes. Return to stockpot and cook over low heat until dry (about 1 minute), stirring gently. Pass hot potatoes through a ricer into a large bowl (don't allow to cool or potatoes will lose their fluffy texture).

Meanwhile, heat milk, thyme, bay leaves, and butter in a small saucepan over medium heat until butter is melted, stirring occasionally (about 4 minutes). Remove from heat. Remove herbs from warm milk mixture; discard.

Gradually add milk mixture to potatoes, stirring with a spoon until combined and smooth; season with salt (about 1 1/2 tsp.) and pepper (about 3/4 tsp.).

Garnish potatoes with some extra pats of butter (if desired) and thyme sprigs.

***Do Ahead:** Potatoes can be made ahead of time. Just before serving, warm potatoes and reserved cooking liquid. Gently stir in 1/4 cup cooking liquid. If potatoes aren't thin enough, add remaining liquid until desired consistency is achieved.

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