

Make a hearty, nutritious meal of a microwave baked potato

It's just a couple of days before payday and your cupboard is looking pretty slim. The last time you shopped for groceries, every single item on your list had gone up substantially and you had to trim your list accordingly. So what's for dinner? As the old saying goes, when times get tough, the tough get going. Here's an idea for dinner that fulfills all of your objectives. Tasty, filling, nutritious and quick to fix. A single large potato, bits of this and that and your microwave will provide a satisfying meal in just minutes.

The microwave baked potato provides the base for your dinner. Rather than wait 45 minutes to an hour for an oven-baked potato, try the microwave baked potato. Some purists claim that a microwave baked potato doesn't stand up to the oven baked potato because the texture of the finished potato is a little different. Don't believe it! A large potato takes just eight to ten minutes in the microwave. Be sure it's fully cooked - that's the trick to simulating the oven baked potato texture.

The microwave baked potato must be punctured with a fork all around, top, bottom and sides. This allows the potato to steam and cook just as its oven-baked counterpart.

While your potato is cooking, assemble your dressings. Much like a salad, you can pile leftovers and gourmet goodies to make this meal both a completely tasty and nutritious dinner.

A slice of bacon or ham contributes protein. Butter is a necessity. A bit of grated cheese provides calcium. Do you have some parsley, chives or onions? Throw them into the mix. How about some sliced olives? Your microwave baked potato is coming into its own now. Look through your leftovers, too often going to waste. What about that little bit of corn, begging to be used? Pile that on your burgeoning microwave baked potato meal. One mushroom, sliced and sauteed adds a gourmet touch. Hmm. What else? Aha! There's a spoonful of sour cream. More calcium, with the added bonus of a delicious tasting topping.

Your frig probably holds lots of bits of food that can complement your microwave baked potato meal. Herbs and spices can make this meal more than satisfying. The neutral flavor of the potato makes it a perfect partner for just about anything you want to add.

So when you think there's nothing to eat, get that potato out and build yourself a tasty meal. Your microwave makes it quick and your seemingly bare cupboard will fill in the blanks. Eat hearty!

