

Title:

A Hymn to Baked Potatoes

Word Count:

396

Summary:

What better on a cold winter's night, than to come home to a supper of crisp-skinned baked potato, piping hot, a knob of butter soaking into the fluffy centre. Perfect for days when you get home in good time but have a million things to do and cooking supper is last on the list.

Keywords:

baked potatoes, jacket potatoes, winter meals, nutritious meals, supper

Article Body:

What better on a cold winter's night, than to come home to a supper of crisp-skinned baked potato, piping hot, a knob of butter soaking into the fluffy centre. Perfect for days when you get home in good time but have a million things to do and cooking supper is last on the list. All you have to do is get the oven hot (200C), fling them in, (with a cross scored on the top, so they don't burst and coat your oven with an irremovable patina of flaked potato) and leave them there for at least an hour, better an hour and a half. You can get on with everything else, secure in the knowledge that supper is cooking without you and then put together a few fillings at the last minute.

One of my favourite toppings is tuna. Just open the tin, drain, season with salt and pepper and some lemon juice (feel free to add mayonnaise if you like it but we don't). Other hassle-free accompaniments are baked beans, grated cheese, left-over juices from last night's stew. Any of these makes a tasty, nutritious meal with no fuss and best of all, one that most kids will eat...an enormous plus point for mothers everywhere.

A microwave hastens the process but leaves you with thin skinned potatoes that might do as an accompaniment to something else but lose the crisp appeal of the true oven baked article. If you are in a hurry, cook pasta instead and save your jacket or baked potatoes for a day when you remember to switch the oven on in time.

A variation to try with smaller potatoes: after washing, drying and scoring the potatoes, rub the skins with a little butter, then season with salt and pepper

before baking to give you extra crispy, tasty skins that everyone will eat.

Another thing to try if you want to get fancy: once the potatoes are cooked, halve them, scoop out the insides, mix with a beaten egg, grated cheese, salt and pepper, heap the mixture back into the skins and return to the oven for another 15 minutes until the tops are golden brown. A meal in itself!

Cheap, filling, nutritious with the right toppings and needing the minimum investment of labour, the baked potato is every busy mother's ideal supper!

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