

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Croquettes, potato doughs and breads, dumplings, pastry fillings and classic potato dishes from around the world.

6 Chapters | Philip Osztromok | Generated with Claude

COOKING SKILLS: POTATOES 2

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Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Chapter 1 · Croquettes and Duchess Potatoes

SKILL GOAL

Make dry mash that holds its shape, then pipe, roll and coat it.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Potatoes 1 taught you to make mash fluffy. This chapter needs the opposite: **stiff, dry mash** that holds a shape. The only difference is the liquid you leave out.

STYLE	MASH	SHAPE	FINISH
Duchess	Dry, with egg yolk and butter, no milk	Piped swirls	Baked until golden
Potato bites	Dry, with cheese and flour	Rolled balls	Baked
Croquettes	Dry, with yolk, chilled hard	Cylinders in a crumb coat	Fried, baked or air-fried
Nests	Duchess mash	Ring with a well	Baked with an egg

- **Floury potatoes** only. Waxy ones are gluey and won't hold.
- **Steam-dry** until no more steam rises, then mash smooth.
- **No milk.** The yolk adds richness and binds.
- **Chill croquettes** hard before coating and cooking.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Duchess potatoes

50 minutes | 3 to 4 portions (about 8 swirls) | mash, piped and baked

Duchess potatoes are very dry mash enriched with egg yolk, piped into swirls and baked until the ridges are golden. They hold their shape because there is almost no liquid in them.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

400 g	floury potatoes (e.g. Maris Piper), peeled and cut into even chunks
1 tsp	salt, for the water
20 g	butter, plus a little melted butter for brushing
1	Lion-marked egg yolk
1 pinch	nutmeg, salt and white pepper

1. Boil the potatoes in salted water for **15 to 20 minutes** until completely soft. Drain, then return to the dry hot pan for **2 to 3 minutes**, shaking, to steam off every bit of moisture.
2. Mash or rice them until perfectly smooth (no lumps will pipe). Beat in the butter, the yolk, nutmeg and seasoning. **No milk.** The mixture should be stiff enough to hold a spoon upright.
3. Heat the oven to **200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7)** and line a tray with baking paper.
4. Spoon the mash into a piping bag with a large star nozzle (or a freezer bag with a corner cut off). Pipe 8 swirls about 6 cm wide onto the tray. Without a bag, drop heaped spoonfuls and ruffle the tops with a fork.
5. Brush lightly with melted butter and bake for **15 to 20 minutes**, until the ridges are golden. Serve at once.

> **PIPE WHILE WARM**
>
> Cold mash is stiff and hard to pipe. Pipe within 10 minutes of mixing, or reheat gently.

LEVEL 1 · QUICK

Cheesy potato bites

45 minutes | 2 to 3 portions (12 bites) | no coating, no frying

Rolled balls of mash with cheese and a little flour, baked until crisp on the outside. The easiest croquette-style snack.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

300 g	floury potatoes, peeled, cooked and mashed dry (about 250 g mash)
40 g	mature Cheddar, finely grated
1	spring onion, finely sliced
1 tbsp	plain flour, plus more for rolling
1 pinch	salt and pepper
1 tsp	olive oil

1. Boil, drain, steam-dry and mash the potatoes as in the duchess recipe (no butter or milk). Let the mash cool for 10 minutes.
2. Mix in the cheese, spring onion, flour and seasoning. It should be firm enough to roll; add flour a teaspoon at a time if sticky.
3. Heat the oven to 200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7). With floured hands, roll into 12 balls and flatten slightly. Place on a lined tray and brush or spray with the oil.
4. Bake for **20 to 25 minutes**, turning once, until golden. Eat hot.

LEVEL 2 · CRISP

Crumb-coated croquettes

1 hour 30 minutes including chilling | 3 to 4 portions (10 croquettes) | a crunchy shell round a fluffy middle

The coating is flour, then egg, then breadcrumbs, and the secret is chilling them hard before cooking, so the soft middle doesn't burst the crust.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

400 g	floury potatoes, peeled and cut up
1 tsp	salt, for the water
1	Lion-marked egg yolk
30 g	parmesan, finely grated
1 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 pinch	nutmeg, salt and pepper
3 tbsp	plain flour, for coating
1	Lion-marked egg, beaten
60 g	fine dried breadcrumbs
150 ml	sunflower oil, for shallow frying

1. Boil, drain, steam-dry and mash the potatoes until smooth, then beat in the yolk, parmesan, parsley and seasoning. Spread on a plate to cool, then **chill for at least 1 hour**.
2. Set out three shallow dishes: flour, beaten egg, breadcrumbs. With floured hands, shape the mash into 10 short cylinders about 6 cm long.
3. Roll each in flour (shake off the excess), then dip in egg, then roll in breadcrumbs, pressing to cover completely. For a sturdier crust, repeat the egg and crumbs. Chill again for 15 minutes.
4. **To shallow-fry:** heat the oil in a heavy pan over a medium heat to about 175°C (a breadcrumb sizzles at once and browns in about 30 seconds). Fry in batches for **3 to 4 minutes**, turning, until golden. Drain on kitchen paper.
5. **To bake or air-fry:** spray the croquettes with oil. Bake at 210°C fan for 20 to 25 minutes, or air-fry at 200°C for 12 to 15 minutes, turning once, until golden.

HOT OIL

Hot oil: use a heavy pan filled to no more than a third, never leave it, and keep children and pets away. Dry the food so it doesn't spit. If the oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a lid or fire blanket; **never use water**. Let the oil cool completely before moving it, and don't pour it down the sink. Don't use a deep chip pan.

LEVEL 2 · BRUNCH

Potato nests with baked egg

40 minutes | 4 portions | a duchess nest with an egg in it

Pipe or spoon a duchess ring on a tray, make a well in the middle, and bake an egg in it. A good use of the technique.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 batch	floury potatoes, cooked and mashed dry for duchess potatoes (recipe 1, without the butter brushing)
4	Lion-marked eggs
1 tsp	melted butter
1 pinch	salt and pepper
1 tbsp	chopped chives

1. Heat the oven to 200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7). Make the duchess mash and pipe or spoon 4 thick rings, about 10 cm across, on a lined tray, leaving a deep well in the middle of each. Brush with melted butter.
2. Bake for **15 minutes**, until the rims are starting to colour.
3. Carefully crack an egg into each well. Bake for **8 to 10 minutes** more, until the white is completely set. The yolk can stay soft, or bake longer for a firm yolk.
4. Season and sprinkle with chives.

> **COOKED EGGS**
>
> Use Lion-marked eggs, which the Food Standards Agency says are safe to eat lightly cooked, including for pregnant women, babies and older people. If the eggs are not Lion-marked, bake until the yolk is firm.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Mash dryness

How much liquid is too much?

1. Make three small batches of duchess mash: dry, with 1 tablespoon of milk, and with 3 tablespoons.
2. Pipe or shape each and bake.

Look for: The dry mash holds sharp ridges. The 1-tablespoon mash softens slightly. The wet mash slumps into a puddle.

EXPERIMENT

Yolk in or out

What does the egg do?

1. Make duchess mash with and without the egg yolk, and bake both.
2. Compare shape, colour and taste.

Look for: The yolk makes the mash richer, golden and firmer. Without it the swirls are paler and a little crumbly.

EXPERIMENT

Fried, baked or air-fried

Three ways to cook a croquette.

1. Coat 9 croquettes. Shallow-fry three, bake three on a tray, and air-fry three.
2. Compare crispness, colour and oil.

Look for: Frying is the crispest and richest, the air fryer is close with little oil, and the oven gives the paler, softer crust.

EXPERIMENT

Single or double coating

One coat or two?

1. Coat some croquettes once and some twice (egg and crumbs repeated).
2. Cook both.

Look for: Single-coated ones can leak or burst, the double coat is thicker and holds better.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Duchess potatoes				
Cheesy potato bites				
Croquettes				
Potato nests				
Dry vs wet mash				
Yolk in or out				
Fried, baked, air-fried				
Single vs double coat				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Swirls slump	Mash too wet	Steam-dry longer; skip the milk; add a little flour
Lumpy, hard to pipe	Under-mashed	Rice or sieve the mash
Croquettes burst in the oil	Not chilled, thin coat, or oil too cool	Chill hard; double coat; use 175°C

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Crumbs fall off	Wet surface	Flour first, then egg, then crumbs; press on
Greasy croquettes	Oil not hot enough	Check the temperature; drain on paper
Burnt crumbs	Oil too hot	Lower the heat; aim for golden

FOOD SAFETY: EGG, HOT OIL AND STORAGE

Raw egg and raw flour: the Food Standards Agency advises against eating or tasting uncooked flour or dough, because raw flour is not treated to kill bacteria such as E. coli. Wash your hands, the board and your tools after handling raw dough or raw egg, and use **Lion-marked eggs**. Cook everything thoroughly. Pregnant women, children under 5, people aged 65 and over, and anyone with a weakened immune system should be especially careful.

Hot oil: use a heavy pan filled to no more than a third, never leave it, and keep children and pets away. Dry the food so it doesn't spit. If the oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a lid or fire blanket; **never use water**. Let the oil cool completely before moving it, and don't pour it down the sink. Don't use a deep chip pan.

Go for gold. Starchy foods that are fried, roasted or baked at high temperatures form a chemical called acrylamide, which the Food Standards Agency says could raise cancer risk. Its advice is to cook to a **golden yellow, not dark brown**. A balanced diet matters more than any single food, so this is a nudge about colour, not a reason to avoid potatoes.

Raw potatoes: keep them somewhere cool, dark and dry (above about 6°C), not in the fridge and not in the light. The Food Standards Agency advises against keeping raw potatoes in the fridge if you will roast or fry them, because the cold raises the amount of acrylamide that forms when they brown. Cut away sprouts and any green patches generously; if a potato is green all over, or tastes bitter, throw it away.

Cooked potatoes and anything made from them: cool them quickly (spread out, within 1 to 2 hours), keep them covered in the fridge, and eat them within **2 days**. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through, and only once. (This is the general chilled-leftovers advice relayed by local-authority food-safety pages; there is no potato-specific rule, but potatoes are starchy, so they get the same care as rice and pasta.) Uncooked coated croquettes can be frozen on a tray, then bagged, and cooked from frozen with a few minutes added.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can mash potatoes dry enough to hold a shape.
- ☐ I can pipe duchess potatoes.
- ☐ I can coat and cook a croquette without it bursting.
- ☐ I know why I chill croquettes first.
- ☐ I can use hot oil safely.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2, chapter 2 is Potato Doughs and Breads: farls, lefse-style flatbreads, potato focaccia and rolls.

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Chapter 2 · Potato Doughs and Breads

SKILL GOAL

Make soft breads and flatbreads using mashed potato as an ingredient.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Potato makes dough soft. The starch holds on to moisture, so potato breads stay tender and fresh for longer than plain ones. Two kinds of dough are in this chapter: **potato dough without yeast** (farls and lefse, cooked on a pan) and **yeast dough with mash added** (focaccia and rolls, baked).

BREAD	POTATO AMOUNT	RAISING	COOKED
Farls	Mostly potato	None	Dry pan
Lefse-style	Mostly potato	None	Dry pan, very thin
Focaccia	About 25% of the flour weight	Yeast	Oven
Rolls	About 25% of the flour weight	Yeast	Oven

- **Dry, plain mash.** No milk or butter in the potato itself; add them to the dough.
- **Floury potatoes** give the lightest results.
- **Handle yeast-free doughs lightly.** They have little gluten, so overworking makes them tough.
- **Flour your surface** generously for lefse and farls.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Potato farls

30 minutes | 2 portions (4 farls) | a dough with no yeast, cooked on a pan

Farls are triangles of potato dough cooked in a dry pan. The dough is mostly potato, so it is soft and must be handled lightly.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

250 g	floury potatoes, peeled, boiled, steam-dried and mashed smooth (about 200 g mash)
15 g	butter, melted
½ tsp	salt
60 g	plain flour, plus more for rolling
1 tsp	oil, for the pan

1. While the mash is still warm, mix in the melted butter and salt. Add the flour and work it in with your hands until you have a soft, not sticky, dough. **Don't over-knead.**
2. On a floured surface, pat or roll into a round about 18 cm across and 1 cm thick. Cut into 4 triangles (farls).
3. Heat a non-stick or lightly oiled frying pan over a medium heat. Cook the farls for **3 to 4 minutes a side**, until golden brown and speckled.
4. Eat hot with butter, or fry in a little oil alongside eggs and mushrooms.

> **USE THE MASH FRESH**
>
> Leftover cold mash works too, but it needs a little more flour. Warm mash gives the softest dough.

LEVEL 2 · THIN

Lefse-style flatbreads

50 minutes plus chilling | 2 to 3 portions (4 flatbreads) | rolled paper-thin

A Norwegian-style flatbread: potato dough rolled very thin and cooked briefly on a dry pan. Soft, flexible, and good rolled with butter and sugar or used as a wrap.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

250 g	floury potatoes, peeled, boiled, riced or mashed very smooth (about 200 g mash)
1 tbsp	butter, melted
1 tbsp	single cream or milk
½ tsp	salt
110 g	plain flour, plus plenty for rolling
1 tbsp	butter, to serve
1 tsp	sugar and cinnamon, mixed, to serve

1. Mix the warm, very smooth mash with the butter, cream and salt. Spread on a plate and let it cool completely, then **chill for 1 hour**.
2. Mix in the flour with your hands until just combined: the dough should be soft and slightly sticky. Divide into 4 balls.
3. Roll each ball out on a well-floured surface as thin as you can, to a round about 20 cm across and 2 to 3 mm thick. Keep dusting with flour.
4. Heat a dry non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. Cook each flatbread for **1 to 2 minutes a side**, until pale with brown spots. Stack under a clean tea towel to keep them soft.
5. Spread with the butter and sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar, then roll up.

LEVEL 3 · YEAST

Potato focaccia

3 hours (mostly rising) | 6 portions | plain mash makes a moist, soft crumb

Mashed potato in the dough keeps the crumb soft and moist for longer. This is a wet, sticky dough. Use oiled hands and a spoon instead of kneading.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

300 g	strong white bread flour
100 g	plain mashed potato, cooked and cooled (no milk or butter)
7 g	sachet fast-action dried yeast
2 tsp	fine salt
250 ml	lukewarm water (no hotter than 37°C)
4 tbsp	olive oil, divided
1 tsp	flaky salt
2	rosemary sprigs

1. Mix the flour, yeast and fine salt in a large bowl. Add the mash, water and 1 tablespoon of oil and mix with a wooden spoon, then with wet hands, until it forms a very sticky dough. Cover and leave for **1 hour** in a warm place, until doubled.
2. Oil a 20 x 30 cm baking tin with 1 tablespoon of oil. Tip in the dough, fold it over itself a few times in the tin, and stretch it gently to the corners (rest it for 10 minutes if it springs back).
3. Leave to rise for another **45 minutes**. Heat the oven to 200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7).
4. Oil your fingers and dimple the dough all over, pressing right to the bottom. Drizzle with the remaining oil and scatter over the flaky salt and rosemary.
5. Bake for **20 to 25 minutes**, until golden. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then on a wire rack.

> **YEAST BASICS**

> Water that is too hot kills yeast, so use lukewarm water (it should feel barely warm on your wrist). A fuller account of bread is in the planned bread course.

LEVEL 3 · YEAST

Soft potato rolls

2 hours 30 minutes | 8 rolls | light, soft and slow to go stale

A classic soft roll, shaped by hand. The potato makes the crumb fluffy.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

300 g	strong white bread flour, plus more for dusting
100 g	plain mashed potato, cooled
7 g	sachet fast-action dried yeast
1 tsp	sugar
1 tsp	fine salt
150 ml	lukewarm milk
20 g	butter, softened
1 tbsp	milk, for brushing

1. Mix the flour, yeast, sugar and salt in a bowl. Add the mash, milk and butter and mix to a soft dough. Knead on a floured surface for **8 to 10 minutes**, until smooth and elastic (it will be tacky; add a little flour if too sticky).
2. Put in an oiled bowl, cover and leave for **1 hour** until doubled.
3. Divide into 8 pieces (about 80 g each). Shape each into a smooth ball by tucking the edges underneath. Place on a lined tray, well spaced.
4. Cover and leave for **30 to 40 minutes** until puffy. Heat the oven to 190°C fan (210°C conventional, gas 6 to 7).
5. Brush with milk and bake for **18 to 20 minutes**, until golden and hollow-sounding when tapped underneath. Cool on a rack.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Mash amount

How much potato?

1. Make three small batches of roll dough with 0, 50 g and 100 g of mash per 300 g of flour, adjusting the liquid as needed.
2. Bake together and compare the crumb and how it feels the next day.

Look for: The no-potato rolls are denser and go stale sooner. The potato rolls are softer and stay soft. Too much potato makes the dough sticky and heavy.

EXPERIMENT

Floury or waxy

Check the type.

1. Make farls with floury potato and with waxy potato, and cook both.
2. Compare the texture.

Look for: The floury farls are light and soft, the waxy ones are dense and sticky.

EXPERIMENT

Resting the lefse

Does chilling matter?

1. Roll one lefse dough straight after mixing, and another after a 1 hour chill.
2. Compare how easy it is to roll.

Look for: The warm dough is very sticky and tears. The chilled dough rolls thin.

EXPERIMENT

Griddle or oven

Cook the farls two ways.

1. Cook half the farls on a dry pan and half in a 200°C fan oven for 15 minutes, turning once.
2. Compare crust and crumb.

Look for: The pan gives a speckled, chewy crust. The oven is paler and drier.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Potato farls				
Lefse-style flatbreads				
Potato focaccia				
Soft rolls				
Mash amount				
Floury vs waxy				
Rested lefse				
Pan vs oven farls				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Sticky farl dough	Wet mash	Steam-dry the potatoes; add flour a spoonful at a time
Tough farls	Overworked	Mix until just together

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Lefse tears	Dough warm or too thick	Chill it; flour well; roll thin and gently
Dense rolls	Not risen enough, or too much potato	Give them time; use 100 g of mash to 300 g flour
Focaccia flat	Yeast dead (too hot water) or not risen	Use lukewarm water; give it time
Pale crust	Oven cool	Bake hotter, or on a hot tray

FOOD SAFETY: DOUGH, YEAST AND STORAGE

Raw flour: the Food Standards Agency advises against eating or tasting uncooked flour or dough, because raw flour is not treated to kill bacteria such as E. coli. Wash your hands, the board and your tools after handling raw dough or raw egg, and use **Lion-marked eggs**. Cook everything thoroughly. Pregnant women, children under 5, people aged 65 and over, and anyone with a weakened immune system should be especially careful. Don't taste the raw dough.

Raw potatoes: keep them somewhere cool, dark and dry (above about 6°C), not in the fridge and not in the light. The Food Standards Agency advises against keeping raw potatoes in the fridge if you will roast or fry them, because the cold raises the amount of acrylamide that forms when they brown. Cut away sprouts and any green patches generously; if a potato is green all over, or tastes bitter, throw it away.

Cooked potatoes and anything made from them: cool them quickly (spread out, within 1 to 2 hours), keep them covered in the fridge, and eat them within **2 days**. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through, and only once. (This is the general chilled-leftovers advice relayed by local-authority food-safety pages; there is no potato-specific rule, but potatoes are starchy, so they get the same care as rice and pasta.) Potato breads keep for 1 to 2 days in a bag, and freeze well sliced.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can use dry mash to make a soft dough.
- ☐ I can cook farls and lefse in a dry pan.
- ☐ I can mix and shape a wet yeast dough like focaccia.
- ☐ I know why potato makes bread stay soft.
- ☐ I know not to use hot water on yeast.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2, chapter 3 is Dumplings: kopytka, pierogi, knödel and pan-fried pierogi with onions.

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Chapter 3 · Dumplings

SKILL GOAL

Make potato dumplings, with and without a filling, and cook them gently.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A dumpling is dough that is cooked in water, sometimes with a filling. Potato dumplings fall into three groups: those where the potato **is the dough** (kopytka), those where the potato is a **filling** (pierogi), and those where it is a **partner** to something else (knödel with bread).

DUMPLING	DOUGH	FILLING	COOKED
Kopytka	Potato, flour, yolk	None	Simmered, tossed in crumbs
Pierogi	Flour, egg, water	Potato and cheese	Simmered, then optionally fried
Knödel	Bread, potato, egg	None	Simmered 18 to 20 minutes
Fried pierogi	As above	As above	Boiled, then pan-fried

- **Simmer, don't boil.** A hard boil breaks dumplings up.
- **Seal pierogi with no air inside** and no filling on the edges.
- **Dry fillings.** Wet filling makes the dough soggy and bursts the seams.
- **Do a test dumpling** every time.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Kopytka (Polish potato dumplings)

1 hour | 3 portions | like gnocchi, but heartier

Kopytka are 'little hooves', diagonal slices of potato dough. They are a cousin of the gnocchi in Cooking Skills: Pasta 2, but use more flour and an egg yolk, which makes them firmer and easy to handle.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

400 g	floury potatoes, peeled and cut up
1 tsp	salt, for the water
120 g	plain flour, plus more for dusting
1	Lion-marked egg yolk
½ tsp	salt
20 g	butter
2 tbsp	dried breadcrumbs
1 tbsp	chopped parsley

1. Boil the potatoes in salted water for 15 to 20 minutes until soft. Drain, steam-dry for 3 minutes and mash or rice until perfectly smooth. Let them cool for 15 minutes.
2. Add the flour, yolk and salt and mix to a soft dough. Don't knead more than needed: it should be soft and slightly tacky. **Don't taste the raw dough**, because it contains raw flour.
3. Roll into ropes about 2 cm thick on a floured board and cut on the diagonal into 2 cm pieces. Dust with flour.
4. Simmer in a large pan of salted water in 2 batches for **2 to 3 minutes** after they float. Lift out with a slotted spoon.
5. Melt the butter in a pan, add the breadcrumbs and fry for 2 minutes until golden. Toss the dumplings in it with the parsley.

> **TEST DUMPLING**

> Cook one first. If it falls apart, add a spoonful more flour to the dough.

LEVEL 2 · FILLED

Pierogi with potato and cheese

1 hour 30 minutes | 3 to 4 portions (about 24) | dough, filling and sealing

Pierogi are dumplings of rolled dough filled with a savoury mixture. This is the classic potato and cheese filling, with fried onion for flavour.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

250 g	plain flour, plus more for dusting
1	Lion-marked egg
100 ml	warm water
1 tbsp	sunflower oil
½ tsp	salt
250 g	floury potatoes, peeled and cut up (for the filling)
100 g	ricotta or cottage cheese, drained
1	onion, finely chopped
1 tsp	oil, for the onion
1 pinch	salt and pepper

1. **Dough:** mix the flour and salt, make a well and add the egg, oil and warm water. Mix, then knead for 5 minutes until smooth and soft. Cover and rest for **30 minutes**.
2. **Filling:** boil the potatoes until soft, drain, steam-dry and mash smooth. Fry the onion in the oil for 8 to 10 minutes until soft and golden. Mix the mash, cheese and onion, season well and cool.
3. Roll the dough thinly (2 mm) on a floured surface. Cut rounds with a 7 cm cutter or glass. Re-roll the scraps once.
4. Put a level teaspoon of filling in the middle of each round. Fold over, and pinch the edges together firmly to seal, with no air inside.
5. Cook in a large pan of gently simmering salted water in batches for **3 to 4 minutes** after they float. Lift out with a slotted spoon.

LEVEL 2 · GERMAN

Potato and bread knödel

1 hour | 3 to 4 portions (8 dumplings) | a way to use stale bread

Knödel are large round dumplings. The bread soaks up milk and holds the shape, while the potato keeps them light. They are usually served with a gravy or sautéed mushrooms.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

150 g	stale white bread, cut into 1 cm cubes
250 g	floury potatoes, boiled and cooled completely, then riced or grated
100 ml	warm milk
1	onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp	butter
1	Lion-marked egg
2 tbsp	plain flour
2 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 pinch	nutmeg, salt and pepper

1. Pour the warm milk over the bread cubes and leave for 15 minutes to soften.
2. Fry the onion in the butter for 6 to 8 minutes until soft. Add to the bread with the potato, egg, flour, parsley and seasoning, and mix well with your hands. **Don't taste the mixture**, because it contains raw egg.
3. With wet hands, shape into 8 balls the size of a small orange. Press firmly so they hold.
4. Lower into a large pan of gently simmering (not boiling) salted water and cook for **18 to 20 minutes**, covered, until firm. Lift out with a slotted spoon. Cut one open to check there's no raw, doughy centre.

> **TEST ONE FIRST**
>
> Cook one knödel. If it falls apart, add a spoonful more flour or a few breadcrumbs.

LEVEL 3 · FINISH

Pan-fried pierogi with onions

40 minutes | 3 portions | boiled, then browned

The traditional finish: boiled pierogi browned in butter with slowly cooked onions. A good way to use up leftovers (within 2 days).

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

12	cooked pierogi (from the previous recipe), boiled and drained
1 tbsp	sunflower oil
15 g	butter
2	onions, thinly sliced
1 pinch	salt and pepper
4 tbsp	soured cream or plain yoghurt, to serve
1 tbsp	chopped chives or dill

1. Melt the butter with half the oil in a large frying pan over a low heat. Add the onions with a pinch of salt and cook slowly for **15 to 20 minutes**, stirring, until soft and golden. Take out and keep warm.
2. Add the rest of the oil to the pan and raise the heat to medium. Fry the pierogi in a single layer for **2 to 3 minutes a side**, until golden and crisp at the edges and hot all the way through.
3. Serve with the onions, soured cream and herbs.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Dough thickness

How thin is the pierogi dough?

1. Roll half the dough to 1 mm and half to 3 mm. Cut, fill and cook equal numbers.
2. Compare.

Look for: The thin dough is delicate and may tear; the thick dough is chewy and doughy. About 2 mm is the compromise.

EXPERIMENT

Filling dryness

A wet filling or a dry one?

1. Make two pierogi fillings, one with drained cheese and one with undrained cheese and a spoonful of milk.
2. Fill, cook and check how many burst.

Look for: The wet filling leaks into the water and the seams open. The dry filling stays in.

EXPERIMENT

Boiled or fried

What does frying add?

1. Serve half the pierogi plain after boiling, and fry the other half in butter for 2 to 3 minutes a side.
2. Compare.

Look for: The fried ones have a crisp, golden outside and are richer. The boiled ones are softer and lighter.

EXPERIMENT

Resting the dough

Does a rest matter?

1. Roll one portion of pierogi dough straight after kneading, and another after a 30-minute rest.
2. Compare how easy it is to roll.

Look for: The unrested dough springs back and is hard to roll thin. The rested dough rolls easily.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Kopytka				
Pierogi				
Knödel				
Fried pierogi				
Dough thickness				
Dry vs wet filling				
Boiled vs fried				
Rested vs not				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Dumplings fall apart	Too little flour, or boiling hard	Test dumpling; add flour; simmer gently
Pierogi burst	Air trapped, wet filling, or boiled hard	Press out the air; dry the filling; simmer

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Pierogi seams open	Dough dry or filling on the edge	Keep dough covered; wet the edge; press firmly
Heavy dumplings	Too much flour or overworked	Mix lightly; use floury potatoes
Knödel doughy in the middle	Too large or simmered too briefly	Make smaller or simmer longer
Gluey kopytka	Potatoes wet or waxy	Steam-dry; use floury potatoes

FOOD SAFETY: DOUGH, FILLING AND FREEZING

Raw egg and raw flour: the Food Standards Agency advises against eating or tasting uncooked flour or dough, because raw flour is not treated to kill bacteria such as E. coli. Wash your hands, the board and your tools after handling raw dough or raw egg, and use **Lion-marked eggs**. Cook everything thoroughly. Pregnant women, children under 5, people aged 65 and over, and anyone with a weakened immune system should be especially careful.

Fillings here are cooked before they go into the dough. Pierogi and kopytka can be frozen uncooked on a tray, then bagged, and cooked from frozen with 1 to 2 minutes added. **Cooked potatoes and anything made from them:** cool them quickly (spread out, within 1 to 2 hours), keep them covered in the fridge, and eat them within **2 days**. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through, and only once. (This is the general chilled-leftovers advice relayed by local-authority food-safety pages; there is no potato-specific rule, but potatoes are starchy, so they get the same care as rice and pasta.)

Raw potatoes: keep them somewhere cool, dark and dry (above about 6°C), not in the fridge and not in the light. The Food Standards Agency advises against keeping raw potatoes in the fridge if you will roast or fry them, because the cold raises the amount of acrylamide that forms when they brown. Cut away sprouts and any green patches generously; if a potato is green all over, or tastes bitter, throw it away.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a potato dumpling dough and test one first.
- ☐ I can roll, fill and seal pierogi.
- ☐ I can simmer dumplings gently.
- ☐ I can make a bread and potato knödel.
- ☐ I can fry pierogi until golden.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2, chapter 4 is Potatoes in Pastry: pasties, a pie with a mash topping, and samosas.

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Chapter 4 · Potatoes in Pastry

SKILL GOAL

Put potato inside pastry so the filling stays hot, moist and inside.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Potato makes a good pastry filling because it is cheap, soft and takes on spices. The challenges are the same each time: **keep the filling dry**, **seal the edge** and **cook the filling through**.

PASTRY	USED FOR	NOTES
Puff (ready-rolled)	Turnovers	Rises and flakes; keep cold, bake hot
Shortcrust (ready-rolled)	Pasties, pies	Sturdy; handles a moist filling
Filo	Samosas	Crisp and light; dries out fast, keep covered
Mash lid	Mash-topped pie	No pastry; relies on stiff mash

- **Cool the filling completely** before it touches pastry, or the butter melts and the pastry goes greasy.
- **Pre-cook the potato** so it is cooked through by the time the pastry is golden.
- **Thicken the juices** with flour or by draining, so the base doesn't go soggy.
- **Glaze with egg** for a golden finish.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Potato and cheese turnovers (ready-made pastry)

45 minutes | 3 to 4 portions (6 turnovers) | the quick way into pastry

A shortcut: ready-rolled puff pastry and a dry filling. The pastry teaches itself; the lesson here is a filling that stays inside.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	sheet ready-rolled puff pastry (about 320 g)
250 g	floury potatoes, peeled, diced 1 cm, boiled until just tender and drained dry
60 g	mature Cheddar, grated
2	spring onions, sliced
1 tsp	wholegrain mustard
1 pinch	salt and pepper
1	Lion-marked egg, beaten, for glazing

1. Heat the oven to **200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7)** and line a tray with baking paper. Let the pastry come to room temperature for 10 minutes.
2. Mix the cooled potato, cheese, spring onions, mustard and seasoning. Crush the potato slightly so it holds together.
3. Unroll the pastry and cut into 6 squares. Put a heaped tablespoon of filling on one half of each, brush the edges with egg, fold over to make a triangle and press firmly to seal. Press the edges with a fork.
4. Glaze with egg, prick the tops with a fork and bake for **20 to 25 minutes**, until puffed and golden. Cool for 5 minutes (the filling is very hot).

> **HOMEMADE PASTRY**
>
> For shortcrust, rub 100 g cold butter into 200 g plain flour, bind with 3 to 4 tablespoons of cold water and chill for 30 minutes. The planned pastry course will teach this properly.

LEVEL 2 · CORNISH

Vegetable pasties

1 hour 30 minutes | 4 portions | a filling that holds its own juices

A traditional pasty has a sealed crimped edge. The filling is lightly cooked first so you know it is done, and thickened with a little flour so it doesn't make the pastry soggy.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1	pack ready-rolled shortcrust pastry (about 320 g), or 2 sheets
200 g	waxy or all-rounder potatoes, peeled, diced 5 mm
100 g	swede or carrot, peeled, diced 5 mm
1	onion, finely chopped
15 g	butter
1 tbsp	plain flour
60 ml	vegetable stock
1 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 pinch	salt and white pepper
1	Lion-marked egg, beaten, for glazing

1. Boil the potatoes and swede for **5 minutes**, then drain well. Soften the onion in the butter for 5 minutes, stir in the flour, then the stock, and cook for 1 minute until thick. Mix in the vegetables, parsley and seasoning, and cool completely.
2. Heat the oven to **200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7)** and line a tray. Cut 4 circles about 18 cm across from the pastry (use a plate as a guide).
3. Spoon the filling onto one half of each circle. Brush the edge with egg, fold over, and **crimp the edge** by pressing and folding it over itself in small pleats. Make a small steam hole.
4. Glaze with egg and bake for **15 minutes**, then lower the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6) and bake for 25 to 30 minutes more, until deep golden and the filling is steaming hot. Cool for 10 minutes.

LEVEL 2 · BAKE

Cheese and onion pie with a mash lid

1 hour 30 minutes | 4 portions | a pie with potato as the pastry

Mashed potato makes a pie 'crust' with no pastry. The filling is a thick cheese sauce with softened onion and diced potato, and the mash lid goes golden.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

600 g	floury potatoes, peeled and cut up (for the topping)
1 tsp	salt, for the water
20 g	butter
2 tbsp	milk
1	large onion, chopped
1 tbsp	olive oil
300 g	waxy potatoes, diced 1 cm and boiled for 6 minutes
25 g	butter, for the sauce
25 g	plain flour
300 ml	milk, for the sauce
100 g	mature Cheddar, grated
1 tsp	wholegrain mustard
1 pinch	salt and pepper

1. Boil the floury potatoes in salted water until soft, drain, steam-dry and mash with the butter and 2 tablespoons of milk. Season well.
2. Soften the onion in the oil for 8 minutes. For the sauce, melt 25 g butter, stir in the flour for 1 minute, then add the 300 ml milk gradually, whisking, and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes until thick. Off the heat, stir in two thirds of the cheese and the mustard.
3. Heat the oven to 200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7). Mix the onion and diced potato into the sauce, season, and spoon into a 1.5 litre baking dish.

4. Spread the mash over the top, rough up the surface with a fork and scatter over the remaining cheese. Bake for **25 to 30 minutes**, until golden and bubbling at the edges and hot all the way through.

LEVEL 3 · FOLDED

Baked potato and pea samosas

1 hour 15 minutes | 3 portions (6 samosas) | filo triangles, baked not fried

Samosas are spiced potato in folded pastry. Filo makes them light and lets you bake them with just a brush of oil. The filling must be dry, and the folding is the skill.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

300 g	floury potatoes, peeled, diced 1 cm
1 tbsp	sunflower oil
1 tsp	cumin seeds
1	small onion, finely chopped
1 tsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	ground coriander
½ tsp	ground turmeric
½ tsp	garam masala
60 g	frozen peas
½ tsp	salt
1 tbsp	chopped coriander leaves
6	sheets of filo pastry
2 tbsp	oil, for brushing

1. Boil the potatoes for **6 to 8 minutes** until just tender, and drain very well. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the cumin seeds for 30 seconds, then the onion for 5 minutes. Add the ginger and ground spices for 30 seconds, stirring so they don't burn.
2. Add the potatoes, peas and salt, and crush the potatoes lightly. Cook for 2 minutes, stir in the coriander and cool completely.
3. Heat the oven to 200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7). Cut each filo sheet in half lengthways and keep the rest covered with a damp cloth. Take 2 strips together (brushing between them with oil) as a double layer.

4. Put a heaped tablespoon of filling at one end of a strip. Fold the corner over to make a triangle, then keep folding along the strip like a flag, until you reach the end. Brush the final edge with oil to seal.
5. Brush the samosas with oil and bake for **15 to 20 minutes**, turning once, until golden and crisp. Serve with chutney or yoghurt.

> **FRY INSTEAD**
>
> Shallow-fry in 2 cm of sunflower oil for 2 to 3 minutes a side. Keep filo covered while you work: it dries and cracks in minutes.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Pre-cooked or raw filling

Do you need to pre-cook?

1. Make two small pasties, one with a pre-boiled filling and one with raw diced potato and swede.
2. Bake for the same time and check the middle.

Look for: The raw filling is often still hard in the middle when the pastry is golden. The pre-cooked one is done.

EXPERIMENT

Sealed or unsealed

Does the seal matter?

1. Make two turnovers, one with the edge brushed with egg and pressed firmly, the other pressed dry.
2. Bake and check for leaks.

Look for: The dry edge is likely to open and let the filling out. The egg-sealed one stays shut.

EXPERIMENT

Egg wash or milk or nothing

What gives the shine?

1. Glaze three turnovers: with beaten egg, with milk and not at all.
2. Compare the colour.

Look for: Egg gives a deep glossy gold, milk a pale matt gold, and no glaze a pale, dry look.

EXPERIMENT

Baked or air-fried samosas

Different machines.

1. Bake some samosas in the oven and air-fry some at 190°C for 8 to 10 minutes, turning once.
2. Compare the crispness.

Look for: The air fryer is quicker and often crisper. The oven does more at once.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Potato turnovers				
Vegetable pasties				
Mash-topped pie				
Samosas				
Pre-cooked vs raw				
Sealed vs unsealed				
Egg, milk, none				
Oven vs air fryer				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Soggy base	Wet filling, or warm filling	Thicken it; cool it fully
Filling leaks	Overfilled, or not sealed	Use less; egg-seal and crimp
Raw potato inside	Not pre-cooked	Boil the diced potato for 5 to 6 minutes first
Pastry pale	Oven cool or no glaze	Bake hot; brush with egg
Filo cracks	Dried out	Keep it covered with a damp cloth
Mash lid sinks	Mash too soft	Make the mash stiffer; use less milk

FOOD SAFETY: PASTRY FILLINGS

Fillings are cooked before they go into the pastry. Pastry cases must be steaming hot all the way through when served, so cut one open to check. Very hot fillings can burn: let them cool for 5 to 10 minutes. Raw egg and raw flour: the Food Standards Agency advises against eating or tasting uncooked flour or dough, because raw flour is not treated to kill bacteria such as E. coli. Wash your hands, the board and your tools after handling raw dough or raw egg, and use **Lion-marked eggs**. Cook everything thoroughly. Pregnant women, children under 5, people aged 65 and over, and anyone with a weakened immune system should be especially careful.

Cooked potatoes and anything made from them: cool them quickly (spread out, within 1 to 2 hours), keep them covered in the fridge, and eat them within **2 days**. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through, and only once. (This is the general chilled-leftovers advice relayed by local-authority food-safety pages; there is no potato-specific rule, but potatoes are starchy, so they get the same care as rice and pasta.) Reheat pasties and pies in a hot oven until steaming hot in the middle, not in a microwave only.

Raw potatoes: keep them somewhere cool, dark and dry (above about 6°C), not in the fridge and not in the light. The Food Standards Agency advises against keeping raw potatoes in the fridge if you will roast or fry them, because the cold raises the amount of acrylamide that forms when they brown. Cut away sprouts and any green patches generously; if a potato is green all over, or tastes bitter, throw it away.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a dry filling that stays inside pastry.
- ☐ I can seal and crimp a pasty.
- ☐ I can use a mash lid on a pie.
- ☐ I can fold a samosa from filo.
- ☐ I know to cool fillings before they meet pastry.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2, chapter 5 is Potatoes Around the World: patatas bravas, latkes, aloo gobi and a Peruvian causa.

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Chapter 5 · Potatoes Around the World

SKILL GOAL

Cook four classic potato dishes from four traditions, and use the skills from earlier chapters.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Potatoes were first grown in the Andes and are now eaten everywhere. Four classic dishes from four traditions show what the earlier chapters' skills can do in a different setting: crisping (Spain), squeezing and frying (Eastern Europe), spice-blooming (India) and cold shaping (Peru).

DISH	FROM	SKILL	POTATO
Patatas bravas	Spain	Crisp cubes plus a smoky sauce	Waxy or all-rounder
Latkes	Jewish, Eastern Europe	Squeeze, bind, fry	Floury
Aloo gobi	India	Blooming spices in oil	Waxy or all-rounder
Causa	Peru	Smooth, chilled layers	Yellow floury

- **Spices burn easily.** Add them for 20 to 30 seconds in oil, with a splash of liquid ready.
- **Squeeze grated potato dry,** as for rösti.
- **Sauce sets the character** of bravas: use good paprika.
- **Cold dishes need cold storage.** Causa is served chilled.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Patatas bravas

50 minutes | 3 to 4 portions | the Spanish tapas classic

Crisp potato cubes in a smoky, spicy tomato sauce. The sauce is the point: cook the paprika briefly in oil, off the heat if need be, as it turns bitter if burnt.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	waxy or all-rounder potatoes, peeled and cut into 2.5 cm cubes
1 tsp	salt, for the water
4 tbsp	olive oil, for frying or roasting
1 tbsp	olive oil
2	garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tsp	smoked paprika (sweet or hot)
½ tsp	cayenne pepper (optional)
200 g	tinned chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp	sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
1 pinch	sugar, salt and pepper

1. Boil the potatoes in salted water for **6 to 8 minutes** until just tender. Drain and steam-dry for 3 minutes.
2. **Sauce:** warm 1 tablespoon of oil with the garlic over a low heat for 1 minute. Take off the heat, stir in the paprika and cayenne for 20 seconds, then add the tomatoes, vinegar, sugar and seasoning. Simmer for **12 to 15 minutes** until thick, then blend smooth if you like.
3. **To roast:** toss the potatoes with 2 tablespoons of oil and roast at 220°C fan on a hot tray for 25 to 30 minutes, turning once, until golden. **To fry:** shallow-fry in 2 cm of hot oil for 5 to 6 minutes, turning, until golden.
4. Pile the potatoes onto a plate and spoon over the sauce.

> **HOT OIL**

> **Hot oil:** use a heavy pan filled to no more than a third, never leave it, and keep children and pets away. Dry the food so it doesn't spit. If the oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a lid or fire blanket; **never use water**. Let the oil cool completely before moving it, and don't pour it down the sink. Don't use a deep chip pan.

LEVEL 2 · CRISP

Latkes (potato pancakes)

45 minutes | 3 to 4 portions (about 12) | squeeze first, fry hot

A Jewish festival dish. Grated potato and onion are squeezed dry, bound with egg and flour, and fried in a shallow layer of oil. Wet mixture means soggy latkes.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	floury potatoes, peeled
1	onion, peeled
1	Lion-marked egg, beaten
3 tbsp	plain flour (or matzo meal)
½ tsp	salt
1 pinch	black pepper
5 tbsp	sunflower oil, for frying
4 tbsp	soured cream or apple sauce, to serve

1. Grate the potatoes and onion on the coarse side of a grater into a clean tea towel. **Squeeze hard** over a bowl to remove as much liquid as you can. Let the liquid stand for 2 minutes, pour off the water and keep the white starch at the bottom.
2. Mix the squeezed potato with the starch, egg, flour, salt and pepper. Use at once, or the potato turns grey.
3. Heat 3 tablespoons of oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Drop in heaped tablespoons, flatten to 1 cm thick, and fry in batches for **3 to 4 minutes a side**, until deep golden (not dark brown) and crisp. Add oil as needed.
4. Drain on kitchen paper and keep warm in a low oven. Serve with soured cream or apple sauce.

> **HOT OIL**
>
> **Hot oil:** use a heavy pan filled to no more than a third, never leave it, and keep children and pets away. Dry the food so it doesn't spit. If the oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a lid or fire blanket; **never use water**. Let the oil cool completely before moving it, and don't pour it down the sink. Don't use a deep chip pan. **Go for gold.** Starchy foods that are fried,

> roasted or baked at high temperatures form a chemical called acrylamide, which the Food Standards Agency says could raise cancer risk. Its advice is to cook to a **golden yellow, not dark brown**. A balanced diet matters more than any single food, so this is a nudge about colour, not a reason to avoid potatoes.

LEVEL 2 · SPICED

Aloo gobi (potato and cauliflower curry)

45 minutes | 3 portions | dry-style curry; spices go into the oil first

An Indian home-style dish. The skill is the order: whole spices in the oil, onions, ground spices briefly, then the vegetables, with a little water to finish them by steaming.

INGREDIENTS (3 PORTIONS)

300 g	waxy or all-rounder potatoes, peeled, cut into 2.5 cm chunks
½	small cauliflower (about 300 g), cut into florets
1½ tbsp	sunflower oil
1 tsp	cumin seeds
1	onion, finely chopped
2	garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1 tsp	ground coriander
½ tsp	ground turmeric
½ tsp	chilli powder
2	tomatoes, chopped
100 ml	water
½ tsp	garam masala
1 tbsp	chopped coriander leaves
½ tsp	salt

1. Heat the oil in a wide pan with a lid over a medium heat. Add the cumin seeds for 30 seconds until they sizzle. Add the onion and cook for **8 to 10 minutes** until soft and golden.
2. Add the garlic and ginger for 1 minute, then the ground coriander, turmeric and chilli for 30 seconds, **stirring so they don't burn**. Add the tomatoes and salt and cook for 3 minutes.

3. Add the potatoes and cauliflower and stir to coat. Add the water, cover, and cook on a low heat for **15 to 20 minutes**, stirring now and then, until the potatoes are tender.
4. Uncover, cook for another 2 to 3 minutes to dry off any sauce, and stir in the garam masala and coriander.

LEVEL 3 · COLD

Peruvian causa (layered potato terrine)

1 hour plus chilling | 4 portions | served cold, so it must be chilled

A cold Peruvian dish: potato mashed smooth with lime, oil and chilli, layered with a tuna filling and avocado. It looks impressive and uses no heat once the potatoes are cooked.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	yellow-fleshed floury potatoes (e.g. Maris Piper or Yukon-type), peeled and boiled
1	lime, juice
2 tbsp	sunflower oil
1 tsp	mild chilli paste, or ½ tsp chilli powder
½ tsp	salt
1 tin	tuna in water (about 110 g drained)
2 tbsp	mayonnaise
1	ripe avocado, sliced
1 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Boil, drain, steam-dry and mash or rice the potatoes while hot, until completely smooth. Mix in the lime juice, oil, chilli paste and salt. Cover and cool for 20 minutes; the mixture should be firm and mouldable.
2. Drain the tuna and mix with the mayonnaise. Line a small loaf tin or a 15 cm square dish with cling film.
3. Press half the potato into the tin and level it. Spread over the tuna mixture and a layer of sliced avocado. Cover with the rest of the potato and press down firmly.
4. **Chill for at least 1 hour.** Turn out onto a plate, remove the cling film and cut into slices. Scatter with coriander.

> **KEEP IT COLD**

> This dish is served cold, with mayonnaise and tuna. Keep it in the fridge until serving, don't leave it out for more than 2 hours, and eat leftovers within 24 hours.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Fried or roasted bravas

Which way?

1. Make the same potatoes two ways: shallow-fried and roasted.
2. Taste both with the sauce.

Look for: Fried gives a thinner crisp crust, richer taste. Roasted is lighter and easier. Both hold the sauce.

EXPERIMENT

Squeezed or not

Latke binder.

1. Make latkes from squeezed and unsqueezed potato mix. Fry both.
2. Compare.

Look for: The unsqueezed batter is wet and the latkes are limp and spit in the oil. The squeezed ones are crisp.

EXPERIMENT

Spices in oil or in water

When do spices go in?

1. Make two small batches of aloo gobi: spices cooked in oil first and spices stirred into the water at the end.
2. Taste both.

Look for: The oil-cooked spices are rounder, deeper and more aromatic. The water-added ones taste raw and dusty.

EXPERIMENT

Paprika amount and heat

Adjust the sauce.

1. Make the bravas sauce with 1 teaspoon of sweet paprika, and with half sweet and half hot, and with more cayenne.
2. Taste each.

Look for: Sweet paprika is smoky and mild; hot paprika and cayenne add heat. Find your level.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Patatas bravas				
Latkes				
Aloo gobi				
Causa				
Fried vs roasted bravas				
Squeezed vs not				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Spices in oil vs water				
Paprika heat				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Bravas sauce bitter	Paprika burnt	Take the pan off the heat when adding it
Soggy bravas	Wet potatoes, or sauce added too early	Dry well; sauce at the last moment
Latkes fall apart	Too wet, or not enough binder	Squeeze harder; add a spoonful of flour
Latkes grey	Left to stand	Use at once
Curry dry or catching	Not enough water or too hot	Add a splash; lower the heat; cover
Causa crumbles	Mash too dry or not chilled	Add a little oil; chill for 1 hour

FOOD SAFETY: OIL, SPICES, RAW EGG AND COLD DISHES

Hot oil: use a heavy pan filled to no more than a third, never leave it, and keep children and pets away. Dry the food so it doesn't spit. If the oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a lid or fire blanket; **never use water**. Let the oil cool completely before moving it, and don't pour it down the sink. Don't use a deep chip pan.

Go for gold. Starchy foods that are fried, roasted or baked at high temperatures form a chemical called acrylamide, which the Food Standards Agency says could raise cancer risk. Its advice is to cook to a **golden yellow, not dark brown**. A balanced diet matters more than any single food, so this is a nudge about colour, not a reason to avoid potatoes.

Latkes contain raw egg in the batter: use Lion-marked eggs and wash your hands and tools. Causa is served cold and contains tuna, mayonnaise and avocado, so keep it chilled and eat it within 24 hours. **Cooked potatoes and anything made from them:** cool them quickly (spread out, within 1 to 2 hours), keep them covered in the fridge, and eat them within **2 days**. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through, and only once. (This is the general chilled-leftovers advice relayed by local-authority food-safety pages; there is no potato-specific rule, but potatoes are starchy, so they get the same care as rice and pasta.)

Raw potatoes: keep them somewhere cool, dark and dry (above about 6°C), not in the fridge and not in the light. The Food Standards Agency advises against keeping raw potatoes in the fridge if you will roast or fry them, because the cold raises the amount of acrylamide that forms when they brown. Cut away sprouts and any green patches generously; if a potato is green all over, or tastes bitter, throw it away.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a smoky tomato sauce and crisp potatoes.
- ☐ I can squeeze, bind and fry latkes.
- ☐ I can bloom spices in oil without burning them.
- ☐ I can make and chill a layered causa.
- ☐ I know which dishes must stay cold.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2, chapter 6 is Putting It Together: a potato party menu, a make-ahead fish pie supper, and your skills table.

Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2

Chapter 6 · Putting It Together

SKILL GOAL

Plan a make-ahead meal and a party spread, and record your own skills and recipes.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

The six chapters of this course are about changing a potato into something else. This chapter plans two meals that combine several of them, then lets you record what you have learned.

Match the idea to the occasion

OCCASION	TRY	WHY
Casual party	Croquettes, bravas, latkes and a dip	Finger food, lots of small dishes
Family dinner	Fish pie with duchess topping	One dish, make-ahead
Brunch	Potato nests, farls	Light and quick
Using up leftover mash	Croquettes, farls, fishcakes (Potatoes 1)	Dry mash is the key
Cold buffet	Causa	Chilled and sliceable

Try it

LEVEL 3 · MAKE-AHEAD

Fish pie with a duchess topping (for four)

1 hour 45 minutes | 4 portions | assemble ahead, bake when you need it

The classic: fish poached in milk, a parsley sauce made from the milk, and a piped duchess topping. The fish is cooked in the milk, so it is safe even if you chill the pie before the final bake.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

400 g	white fish fillet (cod, haddock or pollack), skinned
150 g	smoked haddock fillet, skinned
500 ml	whole milk
1	bay leaf
40 g	butter
40 g	plain flour
100 g	frozen peas
2 tbsp	chopped parsley
1	Lion-marked egg, hard-boiled and chopped (optional)
800 g	floury potatoes, for the duchess topping
1 tsp	salt, for the water
30 g	butter, for the mash
1	Lion-marked egg yolk
40 g	mature Cheddar, grated
1 pinch	nutmeg, salt and pepper

1. Put the fish in a wide pan with the milk and bay leaf. Heat gently to a bare simmer and poach for **5 to 6 minutes**, until the fish just flakes. Lift out the fish onto a plate (flake it, removing any bones) and strain and keep the milk.
2. Melt 40 g butter, stir in the flour for 1 minute, and add the warm milk gradually, whisking, until you have a smooth sauce. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Season, and stir in

the parsley, peas, egg (if using) and fish gently, so the fish stays in chunks. Spoon into a 2 litre dish and let it cool.

3. **Topping:** boil the potatoes in salted water until soft, drain, steam-dry and mash smooth with the 30 g butter, egg yolk and nutmeg. No milk. Pipe or fork over the cooled filling and scatter over the cheese.
4. Heat the oven to **200°C fan (220°C conventional, gas 7)**. Bake for **30 to 35 minutes**, until golden and bubbling, and **steaming hot all the way through**. Rest for 5 minutes.

> **MAKE AHEAD**
>
> Assemble the pie up to this point, cool it quickly, cover and chill for up to a day. Bake from cold for 40 to 45 minutes, until hot in the middle. Don't leave it out.

A potato party

Three small hot dishes and a dip, for six. Croquettes (chapter 1), patatas bravas and latkes (chapter 5), and a soured cream and chive dip. The timetable is the recipe.

WHEN	WHAT TO DO (FOR 6 PEOPLE, SMALL PORTIONS OF EACH)
Day before	Make the croquette mixture and chill it. Make the bravas sauce, cool and chill it. Make the dip (soured cream, chives, lemon, salt).
2 hours before	Shape and coat the croquettes and chill. Peel and dice the potatoes for the bravas and keep them in cold water.
1 hour before	Par-boil and dry the bravas potatoes. Heat the oven. Grate and squeeze the latke mixture last, so it doesn't go grey.
30 minutes before	Roast the bravas potatoes. Bake the croquettes. Keep the oven for holding things warm.
15 minutes before	Fry the latkes in batches. Keep them warm on a rack in a low oven (100°C fan).
Serving	Reheat the bravas sauce until steaming hot. Serve everything with the sauces and dip. Anything hot should be steaming hot; anything cold should come from the fridge.

Choose your next practice

SKILL I WANT TO PRACTISE	PICK THIS CHAPTER	A SIMPLE DISH TO TRY
Shaping and coating	Croquettes and Duchess Potatoes	Croquettes
Doughs	Potato Doughs and Breads	Farls
Dumplings	Dumplings	Pierogi
Pastry	Potatoes in Pastry	Turnovers
World flavours	Potatoes Around the World	Aloo gobi

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Fresh or reheated

What happens the next day?

1. Cook croquettes, farls and fishcakes. Eat half at once and chill the rest, then reheat in a hot oven until steaming hot.
2. Compare each.

Look for: Crisp things soften when chilled and recover partly in a hot oven. Breads and farls are good reheated in a pan. Croquettes are best fresh.

EXPERIMENT

A timed session

Can you get it all hot at once?

1. Cook the potato party for two people, at the same pace as the timetable. Write down when each step actually finished.
2. Note what ran late.

Look for: The first time the latkes are last. Write the corrections into your own timetable.

EXPERIMENT

Your own filling

Invent one.

1. Choose a cooked filling for a pasty, turnover or pierogi (for example spinach and feta, or mushroom and thyme). Make sure it is dry and cooled.
2. Make three and write the recipe down.

Look for: A good filling is dry, seasoned and cooked, with one strong flavour.

Your skills table

SKILL	CAN DO IT	STILL PRACTISING	NOTES
Making stiff, dry mash			
Piping and coating			
Potato doughs			
Yeast breads with mash			
Dumplings			
Pastry fillings			
Spices in oil			
Latkes and rösti-style frying			
Planning a party			

Your house recipes

RECIPE	TECHNIQUE	FILLING OR FLAVOUR	NOTES
Everyday potato side			
Party dish			

RECIPE	TECHNIQUE	FILLING OR FLAVOUR	NOTES
Comfort food			
Leftover mash dish			

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Fish pie				
Potato party				
Fresh vs reheated				
Your own filling				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Fish pie watery	Wet fish or peas, or thin sauce	Drain the fish and peas; cook the sauce to a thick coating
Topping sinks	Filling hot or topping soft	Cool the filling; stiff mash
Everything cold at once	No timetable	Write one, working backwards from serving
Too much frying	Too many fried dishes	Bake the croquettes; roast the bravas
Oven space	Too many dishes	Choose items that suit the oven; use the air fryer
Leftovers go to waste	No plan	Dry mash becomes croquettes or farls the next day

FOOD SAFETY: THE WHOLE COURSE

Fish pie: the fish must be cooked and the pie steaming hot all the way through. If you chill it before baking, cool it within 1 to 2 hours and keep it in the fridge. Raw egg and raw flour: the Food Standards Agency advises against eating or tasting uncooked flour or dough, because raw flour is not treated to kill bacteria such as E. coli. Wash your hands, the board and your tools after handling raw dough or

raw egg, and use **Lion-marked eggs**. Cook everything thoroughly. Pregnant women, children under 5, people aged 65 and over, and anyone with a weakened immune system should be especially careful.

Hot oil: use a heavy pan filled to no more than a third, never leave it, and keep children and pets away. Dry the food so it doesn't spit. If the oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover with a lid or fire blanket; **never use water**. Let the oil cool completely before moving it, and don't pour it down the sink. Don't use a deep chip pan.

Go for gold. Starchy foods that are fried, roasted or baked at high temperatures form a chemical called acrylamide, which the Food Standards Agency says could raise cancer risk. Its advice is to cook to a **golden yellow, not dark brown**. A balanced diet matters more than any single food, so this is a nudge about colour, not a reason to avoid potatoes.

Raw potatoes: keep them somewhere cool, dark and dry (above about 6°C), not in the fridge and not in the light. The Food Standards Agency advises against keeping raw potatoes in the fridge if you will roast or fry them, because the cold raises the amount of acrylamide that forms when they brown. Cut away sprouts and any green patches generously; if a potato is green all over, or tastes bitter, throw it away.

Cooked potatoes and anything made from them: cool them quickly (spread out, within 1 to 2 hours), keep them covered in the fridge, and eat them within **2 days**. Reheat until steaming hot all the way through, and only once. (This is the general chilled-leftovers advice relayed by local-authority food-safety pages; there is no potato-specific rule, but potatoes are starchy, so they get the same care as rice and pasta.)

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can plan a party so the hot dishes arrive hot together.
- ☐ I can assemble a pie ahead and bake it when needed.
- ☐ I can use leftover mash for something new.
- ☐ I know the safety rules for oil, eggs and cold dishes.
- ☐ I have my own skills table and house recipes.

NEXT CHAPTER

That finishes **Cooking Skills: Potatoes 2**. The next course in the series plan is Knife Skills: grip, onions, herbs and vegetables.