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Terri's Herb Mashed Potatoes

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

3 lbs. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
2 tsp kosher salt, plus more
1 cup + 2 TBSP whole milk
2 sprigs thyme
1½ bay leaves
9 TBSP unsalted butter, plus more for serving
Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

1. Place potatoes in a large pot and pour in cold water to cover by 1". Add salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are very tender but not saturated or crumbly, 20-25 minutes (boiling will lead to waterlogged pieces).
2. Drain potatoes (reserve 2/3 cup cooking liquid if making ahead). Return potatoes to pot and set over low heat. Gently stir until dry, about 1 minute. *Drying the cooked potatoes in the pan means that they'll absorb that much more flavor from your herb-infused dairy. Don't skip this drying step!*
3. Do not allow potatoes to cool before moving forward with the recipe.
4. While draining and drying potatoes, heat milk, thyme sprigs, and bay leaves, if desired, and 9 TBSP butter in a small saucepan over medium heat or in a microwave until butter is melted. Remove from heat.
5. In your pot, mash hot potatoes with a masher or a wooden spoon (if allowed to cool, the potatoes will become gummy).
6. Remove herbs from warm milk mixture; discard.
7. With a hand electric mixer, beat the potatoes to get a few more lumps out, a minute or less. Gradually add hot milk/butter mixture to potatoes, whipping until combined and smooth; season with salt and pepper.
8. Serve mashed potatoes with a few pats of butter on top.



Food Fairy Note: May be prepared without herbs for a more traditional result.