



DUCK FAT ROASTED POTATOES

with HERB SALT
Recipe by Scott Pickett

Cook Time 1 hour | Serves 4-6

Is there anything tastier than an old school roast potato? My grandmother, Audrey, used to make the best ones I've tasted, and while I think mine are pretty special, they still don't match hers. I think the missing ingredient must be love: there is nothing better than a Sunday roast cooked by someone special in your life. That's not to say I don't cook mine with plenty of love, passion and a pretty solid technique, it just seems to taste better when you're a child and your nan cooks them for you.

Ingredients

POTATOES

1kg roasting potatoes
20g sea salt
1 tablespoon black peppercorns
5 sprigs thyme
1 sprig rosemary
1 bay leaf
5 cloves garlic, unpeeled
200g duck fat
50ml olive oil
1 tablespoon thyme leaves, picked
1 tablespoon rosemary

HERB SALT

1 tablespoon rosemary, chopped
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
250g salt

Method

To make the herb salt, mix all ingredients in a bowl.

Peel the potatoes and cut into large evenly-sized pieces, so they cook at the same time. Place into a large saucepan with salt, pepper, herb sprigs, bay leaf and garlic. Cover with plenty of water, place over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Cook the potatoes until they are tender. Be careful - they must be tender but not falling apart. Gently drain the potatoes and spread out in a single layer on a tray. Leave in the fridge overnight, uncovered, in order to allow a slight skin to form on the outside.

Preheat oven to 210°C. Place a large roasting pan in the oven to heat. In a small saucepan, melt the duck fat with the olive oil until hot and combined.

When the roasting pan is very hot, add the oil mixture and then the potatoes. Toss the potatoes in the oil and return the pan to the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until the potatoes begin to form a lovely golden brown crust. Add the thyme leaves and rosemary, and stir the potatoes to expose the uncooked sides. Return to the oven and finish cooking for a further 10-15 minutes. Once the potatoes are a nice, crispy brown season with herb salt and serve.

NOTE:

This makes more herb salt than you will need for this recipe. It can be used to season just about anything. Store in an airtight container in a cool dark place for up to 4 weeks.

CHEF'S NOTE:

Such a simple dish like this is all about planning. Buy the perfect roasting spud, and once par-boiled I like to dry mine out uncovered in the fridge overnight. This removes the excess moisture from the potato to give it a nice crusty outside when roasting.

MARKET TIP:

The sugar and starch content of potatoes changes throughout the year so make sure you buy the right potato at the right time. Sounds simple, but it's not! I find that less common varieties like royal blue, king edward or kennebec are best in spring, but a waxy variety like desiree, sebago or golden delight work well too.

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