

How to make the Perfect Baked Potato

Baking a potato is simple, you might say. Unworthy of a recipe or the cloud-space to post it. Au contraire. For two years in the early aughts, I worked in a K-12 school where in addition to teaching middle-school English, history, and civics, I was unwittingly lashed to the mast of an 8th grade home-room whose responsibility it was to prepare and serve “Potato Lunch” for around two hundred ravenous school kids every week. In that time I supervised the baking of around ten thousand potatoes, and I’m sad to say it, but: we did it wrong. Corners were cut. Mistakes were made.

Basically, all you need to do in order to make the perfect baked potato is rub it down with olive oil (what isn’t better with a good olive oil rub-down, I ask you?) and sprinkle it with salt and pepper before you toss the darn thing in the oven, but because this apparently isn’t intuitive to everyone in the kitchen, here’s the winning recipe:

There are legitimate differences of opinion and preference with regard to potato, and with this as with so many things I recommend experimentation. Choice varieties for baking include the Russet, the Jewel Yam, the Sweet, the Yukon Gold, or the Kennebec, though some prefer the red-skinned Desiree.

Ingredients:

Salt & Pepper to taste

Olive Oil: a generous splash per potato

Directions:

Pre-heat oven to 450

Thoroughly wash and scrub your potatoes with hot water and a scrub brush. Leave the skins on, for goodness sake, and don’t wrap the darn things in tin foil!

Dry potatoes and trim of any imperfections. Poke once with fork. In a mixing bowl, rub with salt and pepper and coat potatoes with oil.

Place potatoes on a tin-foil lined baking sheet and put in the hot oven.

Turn oven down to 400 and bake for 1-1.5 hours.