

LEITE'S CULINARIA



Twice-Baked Potatoes with Chive-Scallion-Pancetta Stuffing

by Jonathan King, Jim Stott, and Kathy Gunst

from [Stonewall Kitchen Favorites](#)

(Clarkson Potter, 2006)

Serves 4 to 8

All three of us grew up with this favorite of the 1950s—a baked potato with the filling scrape out, mixed with sour cream and spices, and then restuffed back into the potato shell. This modern adaptation combines the potato with sour cream, tangy blue cheese, crunchy green scallions, chives, and smoky Italian pancetta or bacon. What we love most about these potatoes is that they can be made entirely ahead of time (making them classic party food) and reheated just before serving. And the ideas for flavor variations are endless; see below.

INGREDIENTS

2 3/4 pounds (about 4 large) baking potatoes
5 ounces (about 5 slices) thinly sliced pancetta or thick slab bacon
3/4 cup sour cream
1/2 cup plus 1/3 cup crumbled good-quality blue cheese
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons milk
4 scallions (white and green parts), finely chopped
2 tablespoons minced chives
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Place a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Poke several holes in the potatoes and place on a cookie sheet. Bake for about 1 hour, or until just soft when pierced with a small, sharp knife. Remove from the oven and set aside until cool enough to handle.
3. Meanwhile, cook the pancetta, or bacon if using, in a large skillet over medium heat until crisp on both sides, 10 to 12 minutes, depending on the thickness of the meat. Remove and drain on paper towels. Crumble the pancetta or bacon and set aside,
4. Cut the potatoes in half lengthwise, and using a small spoon, remove the flesh from each potato half, leaving the skin intact to act later as a container for the filling. Place the potato flesh in a small bowl and mash it with a fork or potato masher. Add the sour cream, 1/2 cup of the blue cheese, the milk, scallions, chives, half of the pancetta, the olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.
5. Place the potato skins in a large shallow baking dish. Spoon the filling back into the potato shells, mounding it up. Top each potato half with some of the remaining pancetta and blue cheese. Sprinkle the top with a good grinding of pepper. The dish can be covered and refrigerated for several hours before baking.

6. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the stuffing is hot throughout.

Variations:

Substitute goat cheese for the blue cheese.

Substitute grated Parmesan or cheddar for blue cheese.

Add buttermilk instead of regular milk.

Omit the pancetta or bacon.

Add a dash of hot sauce or chopped chile peppers to the stuffing.

Add roasted or chopped raw garlic cloves to the stuffing.

Add 1/2 cup finely chopped roasted red pepper to the stuffing.

Add chopped fresh herbs such as basil, thyme, rosemary, chervil, or lavender to the stuffing.

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