



World's Greatest Baked Potato Soup

Ingredients

- 8 strips of high-quality bacon
- ½ cup of reserved bacon fat or butter
- ½ cup of flour
- 1 yellow onion – chopped
- 2 carrots – peeled and chopped
- 2 parsnips – peeled and chopped
- 2 stalks of celery – chopped
- 1 Tbsp of crushed red pepper flake
- 8 cloves of garlic – minced
- 4-5 cups of homemade chicken stock
- 8 medium-sized potatoes – peeled and chopped
- 3 Large portobello mushrooms – chopped
- 2 dried bay leaves
- Kosher salt
- Fresh-cracked pepper

For Toppings

- Seasoned Croutons or Fritos
- Sour Cream
- Cheese blend of your choice
- 2 stalks of sliced green onion

Instructions

- 1- Season bacon strips to taste with salt and pepper. In the bottom of a large stock pot, cook bacon until crispy over medium heat to render out as much fat as possible. About half of a cup. Dry bacon on paper towels and set aside. Reduce heat to low, add flour (add additional butter if there's not enough bacon fat) to the bacon fat and stir non-stop to keep the roux from burning. Cook the roux for about 2 minutes, or to a medium "*just starting to turn brown*" color.

- 2- Increase the heat to medium-low. Add onion, carrots, celery, and parsnips to the pot. Sauté until tender, stirring the vegetables constantly to keep from burning. Once tender, add the crushed red pepper flake and garlic. Mix and let cook for 1-2 minutes. Slowly add the chicken stock to the pot while stirring the vegetables to ensure the roux mixes smoothly. Add the chopped potatoes and portobello mushrooms to the pot, placing the dried bay leaves in the pot last so they float on top. Bring the pot to a boil and cook until potatoes are tender enough to mash. Chop up the bacon and prepare your soup toppings while the soup is cooking.

- 3- Once potatoes are fully cooked, lower heat and remove the bay leaves from the pot. Using a potato masher or immersion blender, mix the pot until the soup achieves a smooth yet slightly chunky consistency. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

- 4- In an empty serving bowl, place a few croutons or Fritos in the bottom. Add a few ladles of soup to the bowl, followed by a serving spoon of sour cream. Top the soup with your blend of cheese, chopped bacon, and sliced green onion. Serve while hot, and be ready to cook it again next week because your kids will be asking for it.

Recipe courtesy of Jake Eiserman, Creative Services Designer. Have a recipe you'd like to share? Send it to Ryan at rthompson@macnet.com.