



Hot potatoes to go

Spuds and sour cream dressed up nicely for an easy meal

APIPING hot potato oozing sour cream and topped with an assortment of crispy, savoury bits and bobs. When you are tired and worn after a hard day's work, it can become serious comfort food. Plus, you won't have to worry about scrubbing up pots and pans. And, it's good healthy food – and fast.

All you need is a microwave, lots of aluminium foil, your favourite topping and lashings of sour cream or well-chilled yoghurt, if you are counting the calories.

The secret to a good hot baked potato is in choosing the right spud. I always go for the huge, earthy Russets that come in a large bag which costs about \$3.50. You should get 10 or more potatoes of a nice decent size.

Russet potatoes “fluff” up and don't have the sticky, dense texture of our local yellow potatoes (which are good for curries). New potatoes also don't bake well for the same reason.

All you need to do is to give the spuds a good scrub, prick them all over with a fork and microwave them on HIGH for 15 minutes.

Wrap the potatoes in aluminium foil and let them cook in the residual heat while you prepare the topping.

For this recipe, I discovered some great beef bacon from Carrefour's halal deli section. It was full of flavour and went especially well with the potatoes.

Or try going vegetarian with a topping of baked beans, or creamed corn and fried shallots. My favourite is still that decadent topping of smoked salmon with avocado and freshly-cracked black pepper. :P



by
Pauline
D Loh

pauline@newstoday.com.sg



No baking needed for a great-looking strawberry gateau

ABSOLUTELY no baking needed. But if you take this cake to a pot-luck session, all your friends will be clamouring for the recipe. Whether you tell them the truth or not is up to you, but I believe a good thing shared is doubled, not halved. This is another no-cook recipe to inspire the non-cook. And it's great fun to assemble.

Here's what you need:

- A ready-made chiffon cake from Carrefour
- Organic strawberry conserve
- A punnet of fresh strawberries
- A 250g tub of mascarpone cheese
- Some grenadine syrup

Here's what you do:

- Hull and slice strawberries. Sprinkle grenadine syrup over slices in a bowl. Leave aside.
- Cut chiffon cake into half, sideways.
- Beat mascarpone cheese lightly with a fork. Set aside two large spoons and spread the rest on to bottom half of chiffon cake.
- Spoon strawberry slices over mascarpone cheese. Reserve a few slices for top of cake. Place top layer of chiffon cake over the bottom. Press lightly to join the halves.
- Spread the leftover cheese over top of cake. Arrange strawberries decoratively. Spoon over syrup and jam mixture, allowing some to drip over side of the cake. Finish off with a light dusting of icing sugar.
- Enjoy at once or reserve for a show-off session.

(All ingredients available from Carrefour.)



Hot 'Baked' Potatoes

Ingredients: (serves four)

- 4 large potatoes, scrubbed well
- 1 pkt smoked salmon
- 1 pkt beef bacon, fried till crisp
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 small can creamed corn
- Chopped chives, fried shallots
- 1 tub light sour cream
- Freshly ground black pepper

Method:

1. Prick potatoes all over with a fork and microwave on HIGH for 15 minutes. Remove and wrap in foil.
2. Roll smoked salmon into “roses”.

3. Cut up beef bacon into short lengths.
4. Cut a cross on top of each foil-wrapped potato and pinch in the bottom between thumb and forefinger. This will make the cut across the top of the potato open up and “smile”.
5. Top with sour cream and salmon, avocado, beef bacon or creamed corn according to taste. Garnish with chives or fried shallots.

Note: Reheat left-over spuds in the microwave but remember to take off the foil wrapping.