

Perfectly Crispy, Pan-fried Potatoes – Comfort du Jour

1

Everybody should have one simple potato dish that is easy to make at home, yet still delivers all the goods on texture and flavor, and this, for me, is that dish. These pan-roasted potatoes are crispy and salty on the outside, but soft, fluffy and tender on the inside. The dual texture that I find so satisfying is the result of cooking them twice, though neither method requires much effort, and they can usually be done in the background of whatever you are serving with them. You will want to choose small, thin-skinned potatoes for this recipe—my usual go-to is baby reds because they are waxy and firm enough to hold their shape through both cooking processes. Small gold or yellow potatoes also work, but russets are a no-go for this one, both for their crumbly nature and the thicker skin.

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ lbs. baby red potatoes, scrubbed clean (keep the peel on)
Kosher salt for boiling the potatoes
3 Tbsp. salted butter (maybe a little more)
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cover potatoes with cold water in a medium heavy-bottomed pot. Bring to a low boil, add salt, then reduce the heat and simmer gently until potatoes pierce easily with the tip of a paring knife or a fork.
2. Drain the potatoes in a colander until they are cool enough to handle.
3. Place one potato at a time on a cutting board and press it gently, using a flat-bottomed dish or bowl. Use a clear bowl if possible, to help you see how much the potato is flattening. It should burst open on the sides, but you want to keep it intact as much as possible. Easy does it. After flattening, each potato should be about 1/2 inch thick.
4. Heat a heavy stainless or cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the butter and all of the olive oil. When the butter-oil mixture begins to bubble at the edges, arrange the potatoes in a single layer in the pan. It's fine if they are touching, but leave enough room to insert a spatula when it's time to turn them.
5. As the potatoes begin to cook, they will soak up much of the butter-oil mixture. Slice off a couple dabs of cold butter and insert them between potatoes here and there in the pan. Give them about 8 minutes, then begin checking the bottom for doneness.
6. When the potatoes begin to get browned and crispy on the bottom, use a small spatula to gently turn them over, one at a time. If you get over-ambitious, the potatoes may break, so take it slow. Season with salt and pepper. As with the first side, if the potatoes seem to soak up the butter right away, add a couple slivers more butter, or a thin drizzle of olive oil between the potatoes.
7. When second side is browned, turn the potatoes over once more, for a quick "re-crisping" of the first side. This ensures that your potatoes are perfectly crispy on both sides.