

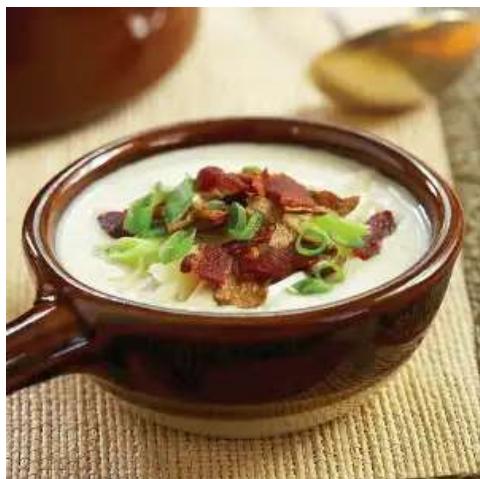
— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Loaded Baked Potato Soup

SERVES Serves 8

Why This Recipe Works

For a baked potato soup recipe that tasted like baked potatoes but didn't involve actually baking the potato, we used rendered bacon fat to cook the ingredients, which imparted a smoky flavor to the finished soup. Whisking sour cream into the baked potato soup just before serving gave it an extra-rich consistency. We also found a use for the potato peelings: We fried them in bacon fat and sprinkled that on top of our finished baked potato soup just before serving.



Gather Your Ingredients

- 8 ounces bacon, chopped
- 3 pounds russet potatoes, scrubbed
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 4 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese,
plus additional for garnish

Before You Begin

- * If you prefer, replace the thyme sprig with 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme. Reserving some of the potatoes in step 3 results in a chunkier soup. For a smooth soup, puree all the potatoes.

Instructions

1. Cook bacon in Dutch oven over medium heat until crisp, about 8 minutes. While bacon is cooking, use vegetable peeler to remove wide strips of potato peel; reserve peels. Cut peeled potatoes into 3/4-inch pieces. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to plate lined with paper towels. Add reserved potato skins to bacon fat in pot and cook until crisp, about 8 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer potato skins to plate with bacon.
2. Add onion to fat remaining in pot and cook over medium heat until golden, about 6 minutes. Stir in garlic and flour and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in broth and cream, stir in thyme and potatoes, and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover pot, and cook until potatoes are tender, about 7 minutes.

- 1 cup sour cream, plus additional for garnish
- Ground black pepper
- 3 scallions, sliced thin

3. Discard thyme and transfer 2 cups cooked potatoes to bowl. Puree remaining soup in batches in blender until smooth. Return to pot and warm over medium-high heat. Off heat, stir in cheese until melted, then whisk in sour cream. Return reserved potatoes to pot and season soup with pepper. Ladle soup into bowls, garnishing with bacon, fried potato skins, scallions, cheese, and sour cream.

TO REHEAT: To reheat leftover portions of our Loaded Baked Potato Soup, gently warm the soup in a saucepan over medium heat until steaming. Do not let the soup boil, which will cause the sour cream to separate.