

Loaded Baked Potato Soup

Today is our weekend producer's birthday and since she is such a beautiful person, inside and out, I wanted to make something special for her on her special day. So, as my children choose their favorite dinner in celebration of the day of their entrance into the world, Kit has chosen Loaded Baked Potato Soup. So, raise your mugs of soup to toast Kit today and enjoy this scrumptious potato soup loaded with chunks of baked potato, cheese, bacon, sour cream, and green onion --- just the perfect accompaniment to a cold winter's day and a birthday celebration. Happy Birthday, Kit!

4	Large Idaho Baking Potatoes
1/2 Cup	Butter (1 stick)
1/2 Cup	All Purpose Flour
6 Cups	Milk
1 Teas.	Salt
1/2 Teas.	White Pepper
2 Cups	Sharp Cheddar Cheese, shredded (8 oz.)
8 Slices	Bacon, cooked and crumbled
4	Green Onions, sliced
1 Cup	Sour Cream (8 oz.)

Garnish: Additional shredded cheddar cheese, sliced green onion, and crumbled bacon

Scrub potatoes; prick several times with a fork. Bake in a 400 degree oven for one hour, or approximately 10 minutes in a microwave, until tender when pierced with a fork. Cool. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise and scoop out pulp in chunks. Set aside. Use shells for a potato skin recipe or discard.

Melt butter in a large heavy saucepan or Dutch oven over low heat. Add flour, stirring until smooth. Cook one minute, stirring constantly, to produce a simple, light roux.

Gradually add milk; cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until thickened and bubbly, approximately 8-10 minutes.

Stir in potato chunks, salt, pepper, cheese, bacon, and chopped green onion. Cook until heated through, but do not boil. Stir in the sour cream. Again, cook until heated thoroughly, but do not boil.

Ladle into bowls and garnish with all or any of the garnish toppings listed. Yields about 10 cups.

Not only does Kit love this soup, but my daughter and her friends are always begging for this quick and easy and scrumptious soup --- they have voted it best among all potato soups including what used to be their favorite loaded baked potato soup at a local restaurant.

Every one at Jungle Jim's and Channel 9 wish Kit a very, very Happy Birthday!

Jungle Jim's Margie Potts