Potatoes with Fried Onions for Breakfast and Brunch

There is a particular kind of weekend morning that calls for a hot skillet, the smell of sizzling onions, and a pile of golden, crunchy potatoes in the middle of the table. If you have ever ordered the breakfast potatoes at a good diner and wondered why yours never taste quite the same at home, this guide is for you.



Potatoes with Fried Onions is one of the most satisfying breakfast sides in the world, and it is surprisingly easy to get right once you understand a few fundamentals. Below, we cover the best potatoes for morning cooking, a reliable method, ways to pair the dish with eggs, creative

variations, and a make-ahead plan so you can host brunch without spending the whole morning at the stove.

Quick Answer: How Do You Make Breakfast Potatoes and Onions That Are Crispy?

To make crispy breakfast potatoes and onions, dice potatoes into 1.5 cm cubes, dry them thoroughly, and fry in hot oil in a single layer for 12 to 15 minutes, turning only occasionally. Add sliced onions for the last 8 minutes so they turn golden without burning. Season with salt, pepper, and paprika, and serve with eggs.

Brunch snapshot:

- Best potatoes: Yukon Gold, red, or baby potatoes
- Best fat: A mix of oil and butter
- Pan size: 30 cm (12 inch) skillet or larger
- Make-ahead friendly: Yes, par-cook the night before
- Pairs with: Eggs, sausage, bacon, avocado, fresh fruit, and strong tea or coffee

Why Potatoes with Fried Onions Make the Perfect Breakfast Base

It Is Hearty Without Being Heavy

Potatoes are naturally filling thanks to their starch and fibre, so a modest portion keeps you full through the morning. When cooked with a measured amount of fat, they deliver comfort and energy without the sluggish feeling of a heavier fried breakfast.

It Works with Almost Anything

The mild, slightly sweet flavour of fried onions and the neutral richness of potatoes act as a canvas. Pair them with fried eggs, spicy sausage, sharp cheddar, tangy yogurt, fresh herbs, or a bright tomato salsa, and each combination feels different.

It Scales Beautifully

Whether you are cooking for one or for ten, the method is the same. You simply use a larger pan or cook in batches and keep the first batch warm in a low oven. That makes this dish a favourite for holiday mornings, family visits, and potluck brunches.

Ingredients for Brunch-Style Skillet Potatoes

This version is seasoned with a gentle hand, so it works equally well with sweet or savoury sides.

- 800 g (about 1 3/4 lb) baby or Yukon Gold potatoes, diced into 1.5 cm pieces
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or avocado oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives or parsley

Picking Potatoes for Morning Cooking

For breakfast, texture matters. Baby potatoes have thin skins and a creamy interior, so they need no peeling. Yukon Golds brown evenly and have a buttery flavour. Russets create the fluffiest centres but break apart more readily, so handle them gently. If you prefer a firmer bite for hash-style dishes, red potatoes are a dependable choice.

Onion Notes

Yellow onions provide that classic sweet, savoury flavour. Slice them into thin half-moons so they soften quickly and tangle into the potatoes. For milder flavour, soak the slices in cold water for 5 minutes before cooking, then pat dry.

Why Butter and Oil Together

Oil tolerates high heat and builds the crispy crust. Butter adds that unmistakable diner flavour and helps the onions brown. Adding the butter after the potatoes have crisped prevents it from burning.

The Method: Crisp First, Sweeten Second

The secret to Potatoes with Fried Onions at breakfast is separating the two jobs. Potatoes need high heat and dry conditions to crisp, while onions need moderate heat and a little moisture to turn sweet. Keep them in sequence and both shine.

Step 1: Par-Cook the Potatoes

Place the diced potatoes in a pot, cover with cold salted water, and bring to a boil. Simmer for 4 to 5 minutes, just until the edges barely soften. Drain well and spread on a baking sheet to steam dry for at least 5 minutes. This roughens the surface, which later becomes extra crispy.

Step 2: Preheat and Fry

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil. When it shimmers, add the potatoes in a single layer. Cook undisturbed for 5 minutes, until the bottom is deeply golden. Toss and continue for 7 to 8 minutes, until crisp on most sides.

Step 3: Add the Onions and Butter

Push the potatoes aside, melt the butter in the cleared space, and add the onions. Stir the onions in the butter for 1 to 2 minutes, then combine with the potatoes. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring now and then, until the onions are golden and soft.

Step 4: Season and Serve

Sprinkle with paprika, thyme, and the remaining salt and pepper. Toss for 30 seconds to bloom the spices, then top with fresh chives. Serve immediately.

Perfect Egg Pairings

Eggs and potatoes are one of breakfast's great partnerships. Here are four ways to bring them together.



Fried Eggs on Top

Make wells in the potatoes or simply slide fried eggs over the top. A runny yolk acts as an instant sauce.

Baked-in Eggs

Create small wells in the finished potatoes, crack in the eggs, cover the pan, and cook over low heat for 4 to 6 minutes until the whites are set. It is a lovely one-pan meal for sharing.

Soft Scrambled Eggs

Fold creamy scrambled eggs into the hot potatoes just before serving. The warmth of the potatoes finishes cooking the eggs gently.

Poached Eggs

For a more elegant presentation, serve poached eggs over a mound of potatoes with a spoonful of hollandaise or yogurt sauce.

Delicious Brunch Variations

Golden Potatoes with Caramelized Onions and Goat Cheese

Cook the onions slowly over low heat for 25 minutes until they become deep amber and jammy. Toss them through the crisp potatoes and crumble goat cheese on top. Golden Potatoes with Caramelized Onions are especially delicious with a drizzle of honey and a few fresh thyme leaves.

Pan-Fried Potatoes with Onions and Sausage

Brown crumbled breakfast sausage first, remove it, and fry the potatoes in the rendered fat. Return the sausage at the end. Pan-Fried Potatoes with Onions like this become a full breakfast hash with no extra sides needed.

Breakfast Burritos

Spoon the potatoes into warm tortillas with scrambled eggs, cheese, and salsa. Easy Potatoes with Fried Onions make an outstanding burrito filling, and the burritos freeze well when wrapped individually in foil.

Southwest Skillet

Add diced bell pepper and a pinch of chilli powder and cumin. Top with avocado, lime juice, and fresh cilantro for a colourful, zesty plate.

Cheesy Skillet Bake

For an indulgent brunch, finish the potatoes with a generous handful of shredded cheese, cover the pan until melted, and then place under the broiler for 2 minutes. When your guests see a bubbling, golden Skillet Potatoes with Fried Onions centrepiece, expect applause.

Building a Complete Brunch Spread

A good brunch balances rich, fresh, sweet, and savoury elements. Potatoes are the anchor, and these sides help you build around them.



Something Fresh

Serve sliced tomatoes, cucumber, avocado, or a simple green salad dressed with lemon and olive oil. The acidity cuts through the richness of the fried potatoes.

Something Warm and Spiced

A pot of fragrant Kenyan chai is a wonderful way to start a slow morning, with its warming ginger and cardamom notes and a splash of milk. It also gives the table a cozy, welcoming feel.

Something Bready

Soft flatbread is ideal for scooping up potatoes and eggs. Try warm, layered fluffy Kenyan chapatis for a hearty weekend brunch that feels truly special.

Something Savoury and Substantial

If your brunch leans toward a late lunch, add a stew or a fish dish. A tender goat sukuma wiki vegetable stew alongside crisp potatoes makes a deeply satisfying East African-inspired plate, and our crispy whole tilapia works beautifully for a lighter, protein-rich option.

Explore More Flavours

If you enjoy cooking with bold spices and comforting textures, you will find plenty of inspiration in our African cuisine recipes, many of which complement a potato-based brunch.

Make-Ahead Plan for Stress-Free Hosting

Great brunches are rarely cooked entirely at the last minute. Use this timeline.

- The night before: Dice and par-boil the potatoes, cool them completely, and refrigerate in an airtight container. Slice the onions and store them separately.
- Morning of, 40 minutes before serving: Take the potatoes out of the fridge, and heat the pan.
- 30 minutes before: Fry the potatoes until crisp.
- 10 minutes before: Add the onions and butter, and season.
- At serving: Garnish, set out toppings, and cook eggs to order.

To keep a finished batch warm, spread the potatoes on a baking sheet in a single layer and hold in a 90 C (200 F) oven for up to 20 minutes. Do not cover them, or steam will soften the crust.

Expert Tips for Consistently Great Results

- Dry, dry, dry. Pat the potatoes thoroughly after rinsing or boiling.
- Use a big pan. Crowding lowers the temperature and traps steam.
- Be patient. Wait for a crust to form before flipping.
- Season in stages. Salt early to season the potatoes, and add delicate spices later.
- Finish with acid or herbs. A squeeze of lemon, a spoonful of yogurt, or chopped herbs lift the whole dish.
- Use the right spatula. A thin metal turner slides under the crust without tearing it.

Troubleshooting Guide



The potatoes are mushy

They may have been over-boiled or crowded in the pan. Par-boil for just 4 to 5 minutes and cook in batches if necessary.

The onions turn bitter

The heat was too high. Lower the temperature to medium once the onions go in, and stir regularly.

The potatoes are stuck

The pan was not hot enough, or you flipped them too early. Let the crust form and they will release naturally.

The dish is greasy

Too much fat or too low a temperature can cause this. Use just enough oil to coat the pan lightly, and keep the heat steady.

Storage, Reheating, and Nutrition

Cool leftovers quickly and store in the fridge in a sealed container for up to 4 days. Reheat in a skillet or air fryer for the best crunch. A typical serving contains roughly 230 to 300 calories before any eggs or toppings, along with potassium, vitamin C, and fibre. Values depend on your ingredients and portions, so treat these as general estimates and speak with a healthcare professional if you have specific dietary needs.

Conclusion: Make Every Weekend Morning a Little Better

A great breakfast does not have to be complicated, and it certainly does not need to be expensive. With the right technique, Potatoes with Fried Onions becomes a dish you will reach for again and again: crunchy, sweet, savoury, and endlessly adaptable. Par-cook, dry, crisp first, and add the onions second, and your skillet will rival any diner.

Try the base recipe this weekend, then explore the variations and egg pairings. Bookmark this guide, share it with fellow brunch lovers, and tell us in the comments which version became your favourite.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best way to cook potatoes for breakfast?

Par-boil diced potatoes for 4 to 5 minutes, dry them well, and fry them in a hot, oiled skillet in a single layer. This produces a crisp crust and a fluffy interior.

How do you keep breakfast potatoes from getting soggy?

Dry the potatoes thoroughly, avoid overcrowding the pan, and resist the urge to stir constantly. Serving them straight from the pan also helps, because trapped steam softens the crust.

Can I make breakfast potatoes ahead of time?

Yes. Par-boil and refrigerate them the night before, then fry them fresh in the morning. You can also fully cook them and reheat in a hot skillet or oven.

What onions work best for breakfast potatoes?

Yellow onions are the most reliable. They turn sweet and golden when fried. Red onions add colour and a milder bite, while white onions are sharper.

How long do you fry diced potatoes?

Par-cooked potatoes take about 12 to 15 minutes in a hot skillet. Raw potatoes may need 18 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of the pieces.

Should I peel the potatoes?

It is optional. The skins add texture, fibre, and nutrients, and they crisp nicely. Peel if you prefer a smoother result.

Can I cook this in an air fryer?

Yes. Toss par-boiled potatoes with oil and cook at 200 C (400 F) for 15 to 18 minutes, shaking halfway. Fry the onions separately in a pan and combine.