

Brown Butter Potato Salad

Serves 6-8

If you came for a potato salad made with mayonnaise, you're reading the wrong blog. This is a riff on my stepmom's mom's German potato salad, which was my first introduction to potato salad and sort of set, for me, the gold standard for potato salad. She always made it with bacon, dill and lots of apple cider vinegar—this one is vegetarian, with lots of browned butter taking the place of the bacon fat, but with just as many onions and dill, obviously. I've also done you the favor of adding an entire jar of capers, which spend some time in the browned butter to lose their slipperiness and gain some crispiness. The onions getting briefly cooked does feel like one extra step, but just do it while the potatoes boil, you're waiting on those to cook anyway. The texture of the just-cooked, kind of still crunchy, almost pickled onions really do bring something special here.

3 pounds small, waxy potatoes*

Kosher salt

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

¼ cup olive oil

1–2 jars brined capers, drained (I LOVE capers, so I like MORE capers, but 1 jar is also fine)

1 large red onion, sliced into thick-ish wedges

Freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons apple cider, white wine, or champagne vinegar, plus more

¼ cup whole grain mustard

1 ½–2 cups dill, coarsely chopped

*If they are small enough, say the size of a golf ball or smaller, I prefer to just boil them whole. If larger than that, halve or quarter them before boiling.

1. Boil potatoes in well-salted water until very tender, 12–15 minutes; drain and let cool slightly.
2. Meanwhile, melt butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally until the butter starts to brown and foam, 2 to 3 minutes. Add olive oil and capers and cook until brown and crispy, 5 minutes or so. Add sliced onion, and season with salt and pepper. Give the skillet a toss and continue cooking until onions are tender, starting to brown at the edges and capers are totally crispy, 8–10 minutes.
3. Remove onions from heat, add 3 tablespoons vinegar and toss to coat. Transfer brown butter/onion mixture to a large bowl and add mustard and dill.
4. Once potatoes are cooled enough to handle, crush them by hand to expose their insides and add them to the bowl with the browned butter, capers, onions, mustard, and dill. Toss very well to coat, crushing the potatoes further as you toss, seasoning again with salt and lots and lots of black pepper. More black pepper than you think. More! Okay, that's good. Adjust with more vinegar or a drizzle of olive oil if you think it needs it.

DO AHEAD: Potato salad can be made “several” days ahead— definitely two, but maybe more. Like many starchy salads, this gets better with age, although I do prefer it on the room temperature side rather than chilled.

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