

Best Mashed Sweet Potatoes

YIELD Serves 4 to 6

TIME 30 minutes

Why This Recipe Works

Sweet potatoes present certain advantages over regular potatoes when it comes to mashing: They contain more moisture, less starch, and smaller starch granules, so they cook up smooth and creamy. The only problem is that their looser structure absorbs more moisture during a boil, waterlogging the potatoes and diluting their flavor. We cooked the potatoes twice to counteract that dilution. After boiling, we placed the potato pieces in a pot and stirred them over medium heat for about 7 minutes. This drove off 12 percent of the potatoes' weight and made them taste intensely earthy-sweet. Because the flavor was so complex, we needed only to add salt and a few tablespoons of butter to complete the dish.



Gather Your Ingredients

- **2** pounds sweet potatoes, peeled, halved lengthwise, and sliced ¼ inch thick

Before You Begin

- * Any variety of orange-fleshed sweet potato can be used in this recipe. Slice the sweet potatoes while the water comes to a boil.

Instructions

- **3** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ¼ teaspoon table salt

- 1.** Bring 6 cups water to boil in large saucepan over high heat. Add sweet potatoes. Return water to boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until paring knife meets no resistance when slipped into center of potatoes, about 12 minutes.
- 2.** Drain potatoes and return them to saucepan. Place over medium heat and cook, stirring frequently, for 7 minutes, adjusting heat as necessary to prevent any starches on bottom of saucepan from getting too brown. (Steady stream of steam should continuously escape from saucepan. Potatoes will become a coarse mash.)
- 3.** Off heat, add butter and salt. Whisk until butter is fully incorporated and potatoes are creamy and mostly smooth, with rice grain–size bits of potato interspersed throughout, about 1 minute, being sure to scrape edges of saucepan. Season with salt and extra butter to taste, and serve.

Drive Off Moisture—and Mash at the Same Time

After boiling the sweet potatoes, we stir the slices over medium heat in a dry saucepan. This stirring phase helps break down the potatoes—so you need only whisk in the butter later—and concentrates the potatoes by driving off moisture, which escapes as steam. After testing different increments of time for this second cook, weighing the saucepan before and after and tasting the results, we found that a 7-minute cook was ideal: It reduced the potatoes' weight by a notable 12 percent, maximizing their flavor without drying them out and rendering them too dense.

