Mashed potatoes Robuchon-style

No one championed mashed potatoes quite like Joël Robuchon, the Michelin-starred 'chef of the century.' His 'two parts potato to one part butter' ratio is iconic. In one famous kitchen clip, he urges his cooks with a flourish: 'Encore du beurre, du beurre, du beurre!' More butter, more butter, more butter! It's indulgence at its finest, and it transforms simple mash into something unforgettable. If you are unable to get your hands on ratte potatoes, use a variety that is waxy so it holds its structure and can absorb the butter.

SERVES 6

1 kg (2 lb 3 oz) potatoes, preferably rattes, unpeeled
250 g (9 oz) unsalted cultured butter, chilled and diced
250 ml (1 cup) full-cream (whole) milk, warmed

Add the potatoes to a large saucepan and cover generously with cold water. Add a good pinch of salt and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for about 20–30 minutes until tender. Drain the potatoes and place in a container with a tea towel on top to keep them warm.

Peel the potatoes while they're hot and place in a second container that's covered with plastic wrap on top with a slit in the centre for you to drop your peeled potatoes through, again to maintain their heat.

Pass the potatoes through a potato ricer into a saucepan. Place over medium heat to warm the potato and stir for 3–5 minutes to evaporate off any moisture.

Pass the potato through a fine-mesh sieve, pushing with the back of a serving spoon – this will break down the potato to give a much finer consistency and prevent it getting gummy or overworked.

Put the potato back into a pan over medium heat and gradually incorporate the cold cubes of butter, stirring slowly and methodically while adding the butter to ensure an emulsion-like consistency. Add the warmed milk a bit at a time (warming the milk prevents it 'shocking' the potato), stirring constantly so as not to break the emulsion, until the potato has a creamy, fluffy consistency.

Season with sea salt, to taste, and perhaps a pinch of white pepper.



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