

POTATO-CELERY ROOT MASH

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I started making this mashed root vegetable side dish a few years ago and it continues to pleasantly surprise family and friends. While pairing celery root and potatoes is not new, I've put my own twist on things, as I tend to do! Celery root adds a brightness around the edges, as does the use of sour cream (or yogurt) plus horseradish - all of which elevate the flavor profile of traditional mashed potatoes. Celery root is also a low-carb veggie full of many beneficial vitamins and minerals, enriching the nutrient value.

I recommend using freshly grated horseradish found in jars in the refrigerated section of the grocery store. Avoid using horseradish sauce or other horseradish products that contain many unwanted ingredients and additives.

The amount of milk needed may vary depending on the moisture content in the potatoes and celery root, so start with less and add as needed.

Adaptations:

- For a dairy-free or vegan version, use vegan butter, and plant-based yogurt and milk.
- Leave out the horseradish if that's not to your liking, the dish will still be terrific.
- For a cheesy version, leave out the horseradish and add a flavorful melting cheese such as Gruyere, Cheddar, Fontina, or Manchego. For the full recipe below, stir in about 1 cup shredded cheese in step 4.

Finally, this dish can be made ahead for later use. Place the mash into a lightly sprayed casserole, cool completely, then cover tightly before refrigerating (up to 3 days) or freezing (up to 2 months). Thaw, if necessary, and bring the casserole to room temperature, then place it into a preheated (375° F) oven and bake until completely hot in the center (165° F with thermometer), about 20 - 30 minutes depending on the size of the casserole.

Makes: about 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

3 pounds potatoes (russet, or yellow/gold variety), peeled if desired, and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 pound celery root, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
2 whole cloves of garlic, peeled
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1/4 - 1/2 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
1/4 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil
1 - 2 teaspoons fresh, grated horseradish (optional; to taste)
1/8 - 1/4 teaspoon ground black or white pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Cook:

1. In a large saucepan with cover, place the cut-up potatoes and celery root. Add enough cold water to cover the vegetables by 2 inches. Add the garlic cloves, thyme sprigs and 1/2 teaspoon salt.
2. Cover the pot and heat to boiling. Reduce heat to medium, maintaining a steady boil. Cook until both the potatoes and celery root are very tender, about 15 - 20 minutes. Drain the cooking liquid and remove the stems from the thyme sprigs, leaving the leaves with the potato mixture.

Mash:

3. Use a hand potato masher, ricer, hand mixer, food processor or food mill to mash the potatoes, celery root and garlic until very smooth.
4. Add ¼ cup milk, sour cream (or yogurt), butter or olive oil, horseradish (if using), the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt, and pepper. Stir to combine completely and make creamy. Add small amounts of additional milk if necessary to achieve desired consistency. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary.

Serve:

5. Transfer to a serving bowl and keep warm until ready to use. If potato-celery root mash has cooled, heat it gently in the microwave before serving. Sprinkle with chopped parsley if desired.