

My Adaption of Frank Pitelka's Potato Salad

Vince Pitelka, 2024

Over the years I have modified my dad's potato salad recipe, with the most obvious change being omission of the bacon grease and tomatoes. Elimination of the former is because it's still delicious without all that grease, and the latter because I have come to believe that tomatoes don't belong in potato salad. Also, this recipe is improved with the addition of Grey Poupon Dijon mustard, which is distinctly superior to other Dijon brands. I've also adapted the quantities of materials. This recipe is delicious while still warm from the heat of the potatoes, and delicious refrigerated for a while, and delicious the next day, and the day after that, etc.

Ingredients:

- 4 pounds unpeeled Yukon gold or red potatoes
- 10 thin green onions or 5 thick ones, chopped (use all of onion except for roots)
- 4 large stalks of celery or 6-8 smaller stalks, chopped
- 3 dill pickles, chopped. Use good fermented pickles – the kind that you find bottled in the refrigerator case at the supermarket. Don't use unrefrigerated bottled pickles off the grocer's shelf, and don't use sweet pickles.
- 12 slices thick-slice bacon – use high-quality hickory-smoked or applewood-smoked
- 10 hard-boiled eggs, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup unfiltered apple cider vinegar, plus more as directed below.
- 3 level tablespoons Grey Poupon Dijon mustard
- Mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper to taste

Process:

- The raw bacon is far easier to cut when it is cold. Leave it stuck together straight out of the package and cross-cut it into half-inch pieces. Put them in a cold frying pan on moderate heat, and as they begin to cook, work them with several wooden spatulas or spoons to separate the pieces. Cook until crisp, and drain on paper towels.
- Cut unpeeled potatoes into bite-size pieces and microwave in a covered glass dish, two pounds at a time, on high for 5 minutes, let sit a few minutes, then another four minutes. Make sure you can easily poke a fork through them, but be wary of overcooking the potatoes. The pieces should retain their shape when mixed with other ingredients. For potato salad, it's better not to boil the potatoes, because they will absorb water.
- Spread the cooked potatoes on a baking sheet and lightly drizzle with apple cider vinegar.
- Once the potatoes have cooled a bit, place in a large bowl.
- Add the bacon.
- Add the celery and green onions.
- Add the coarsely-chopped hard-boiled eggs.
- Add the Dijon mustard.
- Add the ¼ cup of apple cider vinegar.
- Add mayonnaise to a good consistency. The amount is up to you, but too much mayo starts to conceal the tastes of the individual components. Do not use Miracle Whip in this recipe! In fact, don't ever use Miracle Whip in anything.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Mix well. How much you mix is a personal choice. The more you mix, the more potato gets eroded off the pieces and incorporated into the matrix along with the egg yolk. I like it that way.