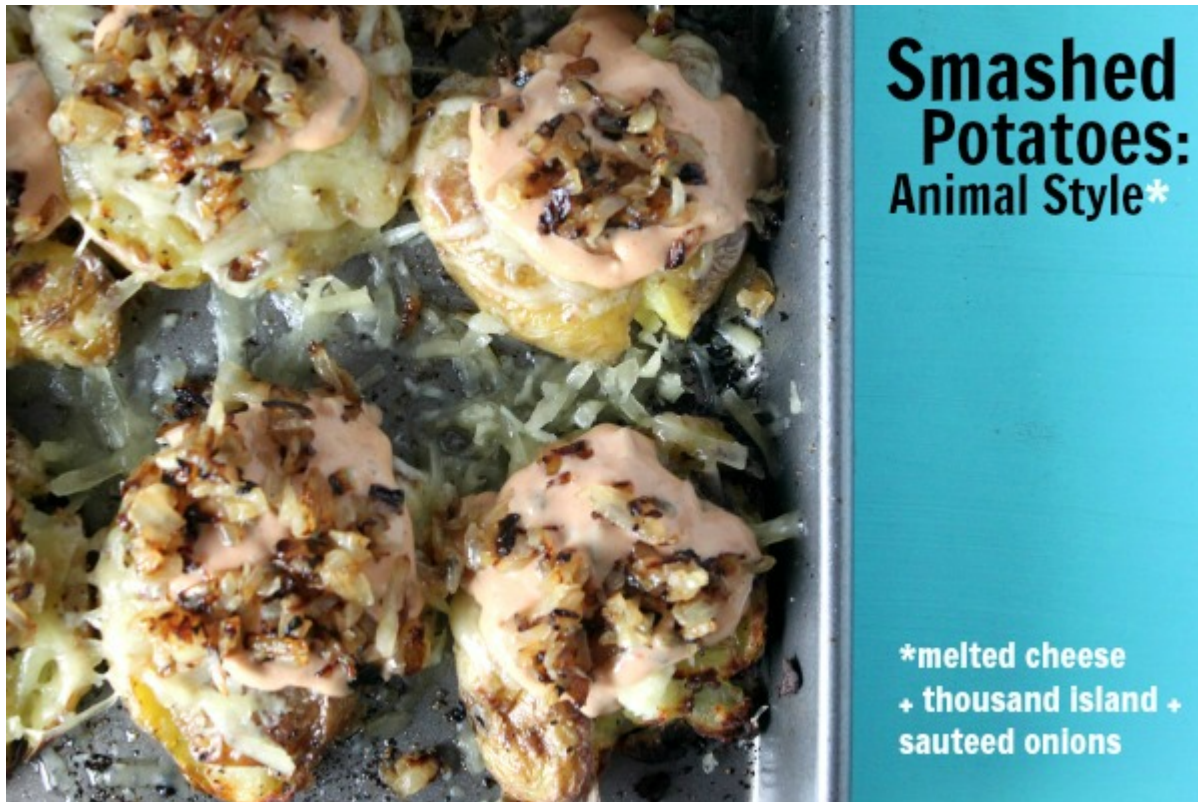


Smashed Potatoes: Animal Style



Dear friends, there's officially no denying it. I am a lover of junk food. I mean, I crave it. I've tried training my taste buds to crave something else – I start every morning with some sort of homemade smoothie and I actually like zucchini noodles and eat them more than pasta. But there's no denying it, I love the junk.



I will never, ever, ever forget the first time I had cheese fries. My stepmother had picked up on my love of cheese and junk and had decided it was time I went to Steak n' Shake.

Growing up in Marietta, GA, Steak n' Shake wasn't the anomaly that it is in LA. In fact, a lot of Southern food chains are considered hipster and awesome in LA now, which makes me giggle to no end. A Dunkin' Donuts opened up in Santa Monica over the summer and folks were lined up around the block for WEEKS trying to get their hands on a corporate donut. When I went to vote a few weeks later, I was the only one in my polling place. I'm just saying, open up a chain donut shop and folks will give of their time but voting!? I'm busy!!

Anywho, the same kind of pandemonium happened when a Steak n' Shake opened up around here. Folks were genuinely excited. I mean, I get it. I drag my beloved family all over the place in search of one-of-the-kind foodie opportunities. I especially get it for Steak n' Shake. Let's go back to 1990, that year my stepmother introduced me to my second love (the first being Mandy Patinkin), cheese fries. I picture my stepmom enjoying those fries with a coworker or something one day and thinking to herself, "Whitney would love these", because this cheese fry visit was an event and it was awesome. When the cheese fries came, I looked lovingly upon all those shoe string fries drowning in a pool of cheese sauce (the sauce is KEY when it comes to cheese fries. I much prefer sauce over melted shredded cheese) and I'm pretty sure I took one heaping bite and thought, "When once I was lost, now I am found". And thus, my life-long love affair with junk food, specifically cheese fries, was born.



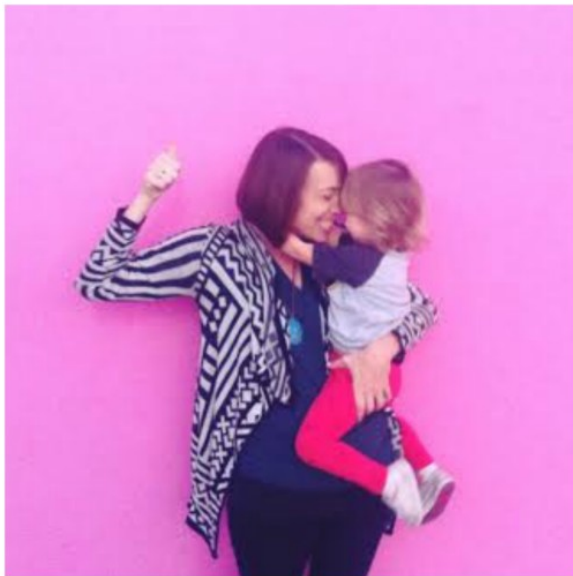
When I moved to LA, I had a list of foodie destinations I needed to hit ASAP. The top of that list? In-n-Out Burger.

OK, you know I keep kosher in the home. But, if you're a long time reader of Jewhungry, you also know that we eat out vegetarian so though I couldn't enjoy the burgers, I could enjoy the fries. What I didn't know was that I could also enjoy a few more items on the menu as there is a 'secret' menu. This means I can order a 'grilled cheese', which is basically a meatless cheese burger. But most importantly, I can order french fries, animal style. What's 'animal style', you might find yourself asking? Well, animal style means french fries which are topped with melted cheese, thousand island dressing and then kissed with a boat-load of teeny tiny sautéed onions. The kid and I have often find ourselves sitting down to enjoy these animal fries for an after school snack now and again and let me tell ya, it's a lovely afternoon. So, because it's Super Bowl season and because sometimes, it's just easier to make my own version of animal fries rather than shlep out to Westwood and wait in line at

In-n-Out, I decided to make the following recipe but with a twist. What you have here is a bona fide multi-tasking smashed

potato: animal style. You can have them as a side dish. You can have them as an appetizer while watching the big game. You can have them with your hung over neighborhood who just needs something delicious and semi-greasy to help her get over aforementioned hang over. What you don't have to do is buy a plane ticket or go non-kosher to enjoy one of LA's most beloved foodie destinations as you now can make your own animal style taters in the comfort of your own home. Huzzah!





The last two weeks of Jewhungry via Instagram.

Smashed Potatoes: Animal Style

Ingredients

- 12 Whole new potatoes (or Other Small Round Potatoes)
- 6 Tbsp Safflower oil
- 1 Tbsp Kosher Salt
- 1 Tbsp Black pepper

1 Tbsp Garlic powder
3/4 Cup Shredded cheese (I used Monterey Jack)
1/2 Cup homemade Thousand Island dressing (recipe below)
1 Small onion, diced VERY small

Ingredients for Thousand Island Dressing

5 Tbsp mayonnaise
3 Tbsp ketchup
2 Tbsp sweet relish
1 Tsp Sriracha
1/2 Tsp garlic powder

Directions for Smashed Potatoes:

1. Pre-heat oven to 450 degrees. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add in as many potatoes as you wish to make and cook them until they are fork-tender, turning the heat down to medium while they boil.

2. On a sheet pan, generously drizzle 4 tbsp of Safflower oil (reserving 1 tbsp for the onions). Place tender potatoes on the cookie sheet leaving plenty of room between each potato. With a fork or potato masher, gently press down each potato until it slightly mashes, rotate the potato masher 90 degrees and mash again. Brush the tops of each crushed potato generously with more oil.

3. Sprinkle potatoes with kosher salt, fresh ground black pepper, and garlic powder. Bake in a 450 degree oven for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

4. While the potatoes are cooking, prepare your sautéed onions by placing 1 tbsp of safflower oil in a small frying pan over medium high heat. After about 20 seconds, add your diced onions and sautee. After about a minute, turn heat down to low and let the onions sit for a bit, continuing to occasionally stir them up. Take off heat once onions are browned.

5. Once potatoes are done, cover with shredded cheese. Potatoes should be hot enough that they melt on their own. Top the cheese with your homemade dressing and finish off with the sautéed onions. Enjoy!

Directions for the Dressing:

1. Combine all ingredients into a bowl and mix. Taste as you go adjusting seasoning to your liking.

