

Perfect Roasties

Have you ever noticed how on a Sunday, someone often disappears in to the kitchen and emerges a few hours later with a lovely Sunday roast. Sadly the meal doesn't appear by magic and takes a lot of hard work, practise and experience to do properly. After all the cook is juggling with many ingredients all of which have to be ready at the same time, so while doing the whole thing might be a bit too complicated for you at the moment, there is no reason why you can't help.

Try just doing one small bit of the meal for starters like one of the vegetables.

When you think you are up for it, try this recipe for the best roasted potatoes... ever!

While all spuds may seem the same, in fact they aren't. Some are better suited for boiling and others for roasting. The best for making roasties are definitely Cara, Desiree or King Edward, which you can get at any supermarket.

The ingredients for roast potatoes are just potatoes, but as to how many, you will need to use your numeracy skills to work that out. How many people are you cooking for, and how many roasties will they want on their plates. When you have worked that sum out add a little extra to the figure, just in case or if you want some left over to try the **Bubble and Squeak** recipe, add a few more. Remember the approx number of potatoes you think you will need.

Now, one really important tip to get perfect roast potatoes is to make sure that all the spuds you are cooking are the same size, so they will all cook evenly and be brown and crispy on the outside and fluffy and light on the inside.

So...

The oven is probably on as the meat is inside roasting. Your roasties will need to go in at about 190c or gas mark 5. If the oven is hotter, reduce the cooking time.

To get them off to a flying start, put some oil into a roasting dish or tin and pop it into the oven while you prepare, about 3 table spoons of oil should be enough.

Peel your potatoes and cut them into pieces (*halves or quarters*) which are roughly the same size. Smaller spuds you can cut in two, larger ones into four. Really small ones you needn't cut at all.

Put them into a pan, add a little salt and cover them with water. Bring them to the boil and let them simmer for about 8 minutes. They shouldn't be cooked through and should still be hard if you prod them with a knife.

Drain them (*or get your kitchen helper to do that*) and make sure they are dry. Leaving them for about a minute in the pan with the lid on usually does the trick.

Put them in to the hot oil in the roasting dish and be careful not to splash yourself, use tongs and don't just tip them in.

Turn each potato in the hot oil so it gets nicely covered and then just put them back into the oven for 25 minutes. At this point take them out and turn them and then put them back for about another 20-25mins.

Check them and if they are brown and crispy on the outside and soft and fluffy in the middle they are done. Generally speaking the larger they are the longer they will take to cook.

Roasties don't just belong with a Sunday dinner. For a good midweek tea or Saturday feast if you are watching something on the TV, then roast your potatoes and just stick some sausages in a separate dish in the oven to cook for the last part. Put the roasties in one dish and the sausages in a second and have some salt, pepper and sauce handy. Give everyone a plate, knife and fork, and they basically help themselves.
