



Cheddar forms a browned crust in the oven.

SCALLOPED POTATOES

SERVES 6

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 1 hour (includes 25 minutes baking and cooling time)

Grated Parmesan cheese can be substituted for the shredded cheddar.

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 1 onion, chopped fine**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1¼ teaspoons salt**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper**
- 2½ pounds russet potatoes (5 medium), peeled and sliced ¼ inch thick**
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 4 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded (1 cup)**

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 425 degrees. Melt the butter in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the thyme, garlic, salt, and pepper and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the potatoes, broth, cream, and bay leaves. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are almost tender, about 10 minutes.

2. Discard the bay leaves. Transfer the mixture to an 8-inch-square baking dish. Gently press the potatoes into an even layer and sprinkle the cheddar over the top. Bake until the cream is bubbling around the edges and the top is golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

To Make Ahead

Once the scalloped potatoes have been transferred to the baking dish and pressed into an even layer in step 2, they can be wrapped in plastic wrap and refrigerated for up to 24 hours. When ready to bake, add the cheese, cover with foil, and bake in a 400-degree oven until the mixture is hot and bubbling, about 45 minutes. Remove the foil and cook until the cheddar begins to brown, about 30 minutes longer. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Testing: Slicing Made Easier (and Cheaper)

What's cheaper than a food processor and faster (if not also sharper) than a chef's knife? A mandoline. These hand-operated slicing machines come in two basic styles—the classic stainless-steel model (also known as a French mandoline) and a plastic model (often called a V-slicer)—but at well over \$100, the stainless-steel model just doesn't seem worth the price. We gathered together a number of plastic mandolines to see how their performance would stack up at better than one tenth of the price of their stainless-steel siblings. In the end, with the help of the interchangeable julienne and batonette blades, we were able to produce flawless slices of melon, carrot, and potato. The best



part was that the least expensive plastic model, the **Progressive International Mandoline Multi-Slicer** (\$6.99), came out on top, receiving high marks for slicing as well as handle comfort, safety, and blade sharpness.

Test Kitchen Tip: SLICE POTATOES THIN

For a uniform texture and cooking time, it is essential that the potatoes are thinly and evenly cut. One easy way to slice the potatoes is in a food processor fitted with a slicing blade (¼ inch). If the potatoes are too long to fit into the feed tube, halve them crosswise and put them in the feed tube cut-side down. A mandoline or V-slicer is the other alternative to slicing the potatoes by hand. Both methods will give you evenly sliced potatoes.