Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes
Chill Time: 1 hour
Total Time: 1 hour 50 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

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Why You’ll Love This Recipe

Loaded Mashed Potato Balls are everything you love about a fully loaded baked potato — crispy bacon, sharp cheddar, fresh chives, and creamy mashed potatoes — rolled into a golden, crunchy bite. They’re the perfect game-day snack, party appetizer, or creative way to use up leftover mashed potatoes. The exterior fries up shatteringly crisp while the center

stays fluffy, cheesy, and decadent. Serve them with a cool ranch or sour cream dip and watch them disappear in minutes.

Ingredients

For the Potato Balls

- 3 cups cold mashed potatoes (about 1½ pounds; see notes)
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- ½ cup cooked bacon, finely crumbled (about 6 slices)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh chives or green onions
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt (adjust based on your mashed potatoes)
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour (plus more as needed)

For the Coating Station

- ½ cup all-purpose flour

- 2 large eggs, beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- 1½ cups panko breadcrumbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

For Frying

- 6–8 cups vegetable or canola oil (for deep frying), OR ½ cup oil for shallow frying

For Serving (Optional)

- Ranch dressing, sour cream, or chipotle mayo
- Extra chopped chives
- Crumbled bacon

Equipment

- Large mixing bowl
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Three shallow bowls (for breading station)
- Large heavy-bottomed pot or deep skillet
- Candy/deep-fry thermometer

- Slotted spoon or spider strainer
- Wire cooling rack over paper towels
- Baking sheet

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Potato Mixture (10 minutes)

In a large mixing bowl, combine the cold mashed potatoes, shredded cheddar, crumbled bacon, chives, beaten egg, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Mix gently with a spatula or your hands until evenly combined. Add the ¼ cup flour and mix until the mixture holds together and is scoopable but not sticky. If it feels too wet, add flour 1 tablespoon at a time.

Intensity: Low — gentle mixing only. Overworking the potatoes makes them gummy.

Step 2: Shape the Balls (10 minutes)

Scoop about 2 tablespoons of the mixture and roll into a 1½-inch ball. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining mixture — you should get 24–28 balls.

Intensity: Low–Medium — steady, repetitive work.

Step 3: Chill (1 hour)

Cover the baking sheet and refrigerate for at least 1 hour (or up to 24 hours). Chilling is essential: it firms the balls so they hold their shape during breading and frying.

Intensity: None — hands-off.

Step 4: Set Up the Breading Station (5 minutes)

Place flour in the first bowl, the beaten eggs with water in the second, and panko mixed with salt and pepper in the third.

Intensity: Low.

Step 5: Bread the Balls (10 minutes)

Roll each chilled ball in flour, shaking off excess. Dip into the egg wash, letting excess drip off. Roll in panko, pressing gently so the crumbs adhere. Return to the baking sheet.

Intensity: Low–Medium — use one hand for dry ingredients and one for wet to keep things tidy.

Step 6: Heat the Oil (5–8 minutes)

Pour oil to a depth of 2 inches in a heavy pot (or ½ inch for shallow frying). Heat over medium-high heat to 350°F (175°C) . Use a thermometer — this is the most important number in the recipe. Too cool and the balls turn greasy; too hot and the coating burns before the center heats through.

Intensity: Medium — monitor the temperature closely and adjust the burner as needed.

Step 7: Fry the Potato Balls (3–4 minutes per batch)

Fry in batches of 4–6, without crowding. Deep fry for 3–4 minutes, turning occasionally, until deep golden brown. Maintain the oil at 340–350°F (170–175°C) throughout.

For shallow frying: cook 2–3 minutes per side, turning to brown all over.

Intensity: Medium–High — stay at the stove; the window between golden and burnt is short.

Step 8: Drain and Rest (2 minutes per batch)

Lift the balls out with a slotted spoon and drain on a wire rack set over paper towels. Sprinkle lightly with salt while hot.

Intensity: Low.

Step 9: Serve

Serve warm with ranch, sour cream, or chipotle mayo for dipping. Garnish with extra chives and bacon.

Intensity: None — enjoy!

Time & Intensity Summary

Stage	Time	Intensity
Mix the potato mixture	10 min	Low
Shape the balls	10 min	Low–Medium
Chill	1 hour	None
Breading station setup	5 min	Low
Bread the balls	10 min	Low–Medium
Heat the oil	5–8 min	Medium
Fry (per batch)	3–4 min	Medium–High
Drain and rest	2 min	Low
Total	~1 hr 50 min	Easy overall

Nutrition (per ball, based on 26 balls)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	95 kcal
Total Fat	5.5 g

Nutrient	Amount
Saturated Fat	2 g
Cholesterol	25 mg
Sodium	180 mg
Total Carbohydrates	8 g
Dietary Fiber	0.5 g
Total Sugars	1 g
Protein	3.5 g