

ALI'S KITCHEN

Refrigerator Mashed Potatoes Are a Holiday Favorite

The history of how the recipe came to be and the woman behind it are as delectable as the dish

Column and photos by Ali Carter, Wisconsin Potato Growers Auxiliary
Favorite family recipe shared by Lisa O. O'Flyng, Ruder Ware

Hello, readers. I am thrilled to share a special recipe from Lisa O. O'Flyng. Lisa is the marketing director for Ruder Ware law firm, an Associate Division member company of the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association.

Lisa is a fellow "kitchen mechanic" who has graciously shared all the details for a family favorite potato dish, passed down by a great aunt who was quite a forward thinker and trendsetter!

I hope you enjoy reading about the history of how this recipe came to be and the woman behind it as much as I did. I also hope you give this fabulous recipe a try in your own kitchen. I've promised my crew that these Refrigerator Mashed Potatoes will be gracing our table at an upcoming family gathering.

Without further ado, here are the story and recipe from Lisa:

"For so many of us, holidays are filled with memories, and what better way to relive those memories and honor our loved ones than through food?" Lisa proposes. "This recipe is one that has been passed down for three generations—it never disappoints."

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Left: A 1970 flyer advertises a cooking school conducted by Olga Schley, Kansas City Power & Light Company's home service director. Lisa O. O'Flyng of Ruder Ware shared this Refrigerator Mashed Potatoes recipe made by Olga, who was Lisa's mother-in-law's aunt.



INGREDIENTS: Refrigerator Mashed Potatoes

- 5 lbs. potatoes (red or Yukon Gold, peeled)
- 1 8-oz. package cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tsp. salt (or more or less to taste)
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. butter

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Ali's Kitchen...

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The recipe creator was my mother-in-law's aunt, Olga Plishonig Schley (or Aunt Olga as we know her).

"She grew up as a fiercely independent farm girl near West Bend, Wisconsin. When World War II broke out, she joined the Navy's new Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES)."

HOME ON THE GI BILL

"Aunt Olga received training in personnel work and eventually became a company commander overseeing 300 women," Lisa continues. "After the war, she took advantage of the GI Bill and headed to Iowa State University where she studied home economics, focusing on cooking.

"She later moved to Kansas City and took a position with Kansas City Power & Light Company (KCP&L). She managed a team of home economists who promoted electricity to run 'new' appliances (everything from ranges to toaster ovens to electric skillets).

"Aunt Olga had a demonstration kitchen in an auditorium at KCP&L's headquarters and frequently taught cooking classes. She had quite a following, and her recipes were often included in the envelopes sent to KCP&L customers along with their monthly bills.

"Her recipe for Refrigerator Mashed Potatoes is perfect for holiday entertaining, as it can be made ahead of time and baked just before it's

needed. The recipe is deceptively simple and takes little effort to prepare.

"I've found you can add different variations depending on your family's tastes. This past Christmas, I added sautéed leeks and fresh basil, with a drizzle of basil-infused olive oil in lieu of the butter pats before baking.

"In place of the sour cream, I've added Greek yogurt and it's turned out beautifully. Any combination of herbs added to the potatoes works wonderfully—dill, chives, parsley, etc. A sprinkling of paprika feels festive."

DIRECTIONS

Cook peeled potatoes in boiling salted water until tender. Drain.

With a hand masher, mash the potatoes until smooth in a mixing bowl.

Add the remaining ingredients and beat until light and fluffy. Depending on the consistency of the potatoes, you may need to add a little milk to thin. Cool.

Transfer to a buttered casserole dish and place in the refrigerator until ready to use.

The potatoes can be used at any time within one week. When ready, dot potatoes with 2 tablespoons of butter and bake in a 350-degree oven until heated through (about 45 minutes).

Enjoy! **BCT**

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