

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 35 minutes
- Total Time: 55 minutes
- Intensity Level: Easy (Beginner-friendly with standard stovetop techniques)
- Yield: 6 generous servings
- Course: Main Course / Soup

Table of Contents



- [Ingredients](#)
 - [For the Soup Base:](#)
 - [For the Loaded Toppings & Seasoning:](#)
- [Step-by-Step Instructions](#)
 - [Step 1: Crisp the Bacon](#)
 - [Step 2: Sauté Aromatics & Build the Roux](#)
 - [Step 3: Simmer the Potatoes & Broth](#)
 - [Step 4: Blend for Creaminess](#)
 - [Step 5: Enrich with Dairy and Cheese](#)
 - [Step 6: Serve and Load It Up](#)
- [Chef's Pro-Tips for Success](#)
- [Nutritional Information](#)

Ingredients

For the Soup Base:

- 6 large Russet potatoes (about 3 pounds), peeled and diced into 1/2-inch cubes
- 6 slices thick-cut bacon, diced
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour (to create a rich thickening roux)
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- 2 cups whole milk (or half-and-half for an even richer texture)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter

For the Loaded Toppings & Seasoning:

- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, freshly shredded (divided: 1.5 cups stirred in, 0.5 cup for topping)
- 1 cup sour cream (plus extra for serving)
- 1 bunch fresh chives, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika (optional, adds a wonderful grilled finish)

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Crisp the Bacon

In a large, heavy-bottomed Dutch oven or stockpot over medium heat, add the diced bacon. Cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp and rendered of its fat (about 6 to 8 minutes). Use a slotted spoon to transfer the crispy bacon bits to a paper towel-lined plate, leaving the delicious bacon drippings in the pot.

Step 2: Sauté Aromatics & Build the Roux

Place the pot with the bacon drippings back over medium heat. Add the 4 tablespoons of

unsalted butter and let it melt. Add the diced yellow onion and sauté for 4 to 5 minutes until translucent and tender. Stir in the minced garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.

Sprinkle the all-purpose flour evenly over the onion and garlic mixture. Whisk continuously for 1 to 2 minutes to cook out the raw flour taste, creating a smooth paste (blond roux).

Step 3: Simmer the Potatoes & Broth

Slowly pour in the chicken broth and whole milk while whisking vigorously to prevent any lumps from forming. Add the diced russet potatoes, kosher salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and smoked paprika.

Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover with a lid, and let it simmer for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are fork-tender and begin to break down naturally.

Step 4: Blend for Creaminess

For a textured soup with hearty potato chunks, use a potato masher right in the pot to mash about half of the potatoes. For a completely silky, restaurant-style smooth texture, use an immersion blender to pulse the soup a few times, leaving some texture intact.

Step 5: Enrich with Dairy and Cheese

Turn the heat down to low. Stir in the heavy cream, sour cream, and 1.5 cups of the freshly shredded sharp cheddar cheese. Stir gently until the cheese is completely melted and incorporated into the soup. Taste the soup and season with additional salt and pepper if needed.

Step 6: Serve and Load It Up

Ladle the hot soup into bowls. Generously top each serving with the remaining sharp cheddar cheese, crispy bacon bits, a dollop of sour cream, and a generous sprinkle of freshly chopped

chives.

Chef's Pro-Tips for Success

- **Shred Your Own Cheese:** Pre-bagged shredded cheese is coated with anti-caking agents that can prevent it from melting smoothly into a creamy base. Take an extra minute to grate a block of sharp cheddar for the best texture.
- **Potato Choice Matters:** Russet potatoes are high in starch, which helps naturally thicken the soup as they simmer and break down. Avoid waxy potatoes like red or fingerling potatoes for this specific recipe.
- **Storage and Reheating:** Store leftover soup in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently on the stovetop over medium-low heat, adding a splash of milk or broth if the soup has thickened too much in the fridge. Freezing is not recommended due to the dairy content.

Nutritional Information

Note: Nutritional values are estimated per serving based on 6 total servings using whole milk and heavy cream.

- **Calories:** 520 kcal
- **Total Fat:** 34g
 - *Saturated Fat:* 18g

- Cholesterol: 95mg
- Sodium: 780mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 38g
 - *Dietary Fiber*: 4g
 - *Sugars*: 6g
- Protein: 18g