

# Breakfast Recipe: Cheesy Potatoes

Food & nutrition / Andrew Skurka



This breakfast recipe has been a staple on our guided trips since 2015, when Amanda set out to create a savory dish to help balance sweet options like oatmeal or [Quickstart Cereal](#).

The ingredients and ratios have been tweaked multiple times based on feedback, and I believe we now have a real winner. Among 100+ clients polled during the 2019 season, it was their top-rated breakfast, with an average score of 2.60/3.0.

## Key stats

- 4.5 ounces per serving (128 grams)
- 537 calories
- 119 calories/ounce

To increase the caloric density, use more butter and less potato, and substitute the canned green chilies for dried. To increase the net calories, add more of the goodies, specifically bacon, cheese, or butter.



The finished product, plus a little bit of green onion that I happened to have on-hand.

## Ingredients

Backpacking Recipes & Ingredients : Cheesy Potatoes						
Ingredient	Ounces	Calories per oz	Comments	Allergy info	Where to buy	Buy online now
Mashed potatoes	1.20	97	Instant, deceptively filling	-	Grocery, Costco, online	<a href="#">Idahoan Honest Earth</a>
Nutritional Yeast	0.15	105	Cheesy & savory flavor	-	Online, natural grocer	<a href="#">Anthony's</a>
Dried Onion	0.05	95	Adds flavor	-	Spice aisle	<a href="#">365 Organic</a>
Crumbled bacon	1.00	120	Alt: cured salami, pepperoni	Pork, unless soy	Costco, online	<a href="#">Hormel Crumbled</a>
Green chiles	0.30	23	Adds flavor. Or dried.	-		<a href="#">Ortega Green Chiles</a>
Cheese	1.00	110	Rec'd extra sharp cheddar	Dairy	Grocery	Buy locally
Butter	0.80	203	Adds flavor and caloric density	Dairy	Grocery	Buy locally
Universal spice kit	0.00	0	Salt, pepper, red pepper flakes	-	Grocery, Costco, online	<a href="#">1-oz HDPE bottles</a>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>119</b>	-	-	-	-

Cheesy Potatoes >

This is a deceptively large meal because the potatoes absorb a lot of water per their dry weight. If your breakfast appetite is suppressed, reduce the potato flakes by a half-ounce. Alternatively, save it for later in the trip when you have a thinner meal and/or you are hungrier.

The nutritional yeast adds a savory, Parmesan-like characteristic. It can also be substituted for real Parmesan if you'd like — add it at the end of the cooking process with the cheddar.

Find real crumbled bacon at your grocery store, or in 20-ounce packages at Costco. You can also cook bacon at home prior to your trip. Definitely pack the bacon fat, too, for extra flavor and calories. For vegetarians, there are many non-meat bacon products.

For our guided groups we pack a can of green chilies. For soloists and smaller groups, a smaller amount of dried green chilies would more calorically dense and perhaps less wasteful. You can also consider taco seasoning, paprika, or similar.

The original recipe used whole milk powder (Nido) and powdered cheese, but last year we swapped these ingredients for butter and real cheese. The response from clients was very positive, so we'll be sticking with these substitutions. This updated version is creamier, more

calorically dense, and more flavorful.



The ingredients

## At-home preparation

Package the potato flakes, nutritional yeast, and dried onion in a sandwich bag. For shorter trips, soloists can add the crumbed bacon, too — I've had no ill effects after it was repackaged and sat in a hot car for 10 days. The canned green chilies are more perishable, so find a replacement or skip them.

On group trips, we package the bacon separately so that vegetarians and vegans can forgo their share.

Put the cheese in another sandwich bag, or keep it in its original packaging.

Unless it's a cold trip, the butter is best stored in a plastic food container so that it doesn't make a mess if/when it gets soft. On group trips, we divide these items in the field.

## Cooking instructions

Per usual, preparing this recipe is very straightforward.

1. Bring 10 ounces (300 ml) of water to a boil. This meal does not need to be "cooked," and you shouldn't need to reheat it.
2. Add half of the bag of potato flakes, then stir.
3. Add the rest of the bag, and stir again. This two-step method will help prevent spills and clumps.
4. Remove from the flame, and mix in the butter and bacon. The cheese and chilies can be mixed in, too, or sprinkled on top.

If you want a soupier consistency, use 12+ ounces of water.



The watered-down version, which is my preference

Have questions or an experience with this meal?  
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