

Soft Potato Blinis

Yield: ~24–30 bite-size blinis (5–6 cm)

Time: 20 min prep + 45–60 min rise + 20 min cooking

Ingredients

- 450 g floury potatoes (e.g., Yukon Gold), peeled and chunked
- 120 ml whole milk, warmed to 38–40°C
- 6 g instant yeast (2 tsp)
- 1 tsp sugar
- 100 g plain flour ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup), sifted
- 2 large eggs, separated
- 30 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fine sea salt, plus more to taste
- Clarified butter or neutral oil, for the pan

To serve:

- 150–250 g chilled caviar
- Crème fraîche (or cultured sour cream)
- Snipped chives or very fine shallot (optional)
- Lemon wedges (optional)

Equipment

- Small saucepan, potato ricer or fine masher, mixing bowls, whisk, rubber spatula, nonstick or seasoned cast-iron skillet, 5 cm (2 in) ring (optional).
- Method
- Cook the potatoes. Simmer in salted water until very tender (12–15 min). Drain well and let steam-dry 2–3 min.
- Rice while warm. Pass potatoes through a ricer into a bowl. Spread out to let steam escape; cool to just warm.
- Activate the yeast. In a small bowl, whisk warm milk with yeast and sugar; stand 5–10 min until foamy.
- Make the batter base. Fold sifted flour into the riced potatoes. Add egg yolks, melted butter, salt, then whisk in the foamy milk until smooth and thick—like heavy cream.
- First rest. Cover and let rise in a warm spot 45–60 min until slightly puffed.
- Lighten the batter. Whisk egg whites to soft peaks; gently fold into the batter in two additions. Taste and adjust salt.
- Cook. Heat a lightly greased skillet over medium. Spoon 1 Tbsp batter per blini (use a ring for perfect rounds). Cook 1–2 min until bubbles form and edges set; flip and cook 30–60 sec more. Adjust heat to keep them pale-golden, not brown.
- Hold warm. Transfer to a 90–100°C oven while you finish the batch.

To Serve (Caviar Service)

- Serve blinis just warm—not hot—with a small quenelle of crème fraîche and a restrained spoon of chilled caviar.
- Offer chives and lemon at the side. Use mother-of-pearl or non-reactive spoons.

Chef's Notes

- Texture keys: Rice (don't mash) the potatoes and fold, don't beat, to keep them airy.
- Make-ahead: Cook blinis, cool, then wrap and refrigerate up to 24 hours or freeze up to 1 month. Reheat 6–8 min at 180°C.
- No-yeast option: Substitute 1 tsp baking powder for yeast; skip the rise and rest 10 min before cooking (less complex flavor, quicker).
- Size guide: For canapé service, aim for 5 cm; for plated starters, 7–8 cm.