

Oven Hash Browns — The Sheet-Pan Slab

Shatter-crisp both faces, tender inside, barely hands-on — one slab feeds the crew. The whole game is getting the water out before it hits the oven.

Yield: **12 squares** (half-sheet) Active: **25 min** Total: **1 hr** Oven: **230°C** (450°F) Done: **deep gold**

WHERE IT WAS BORN

American diners — “hashed brown potatoes” defined by Maria Parloa, 1888 (*Kitchen Companion*); the name from French *hacher*, to chop. Europe’s older cousin: Bernese *rösti*, 17th c.

EATEN, AUTHENTICALLY

The diner breakfast plate — eggs, bacon, toast; in Switzerland a meal in itself, *rösti* under fried eggs or *Zürcher Geschnetzeltes*.

HOW IT’S USED NOW

A global breakfast staple; the same grated-potato base becomes *rösti*, latkes, the skillet cake — crust over a tender middle, topped any way.

INGREDIENTS

12 SQUARES · WEIGHT

Russet / Maris Piper, peeled (high-starch)	2000g
Fine sea salt (for the squeeze)	12g
Cornstarch	30g
Clarified butter / oil (toss)	60g
Oil, for the hot pan	40g
Black pepper + opt. onion, paprika	—

THE RATIO — OF THE SQUEEZED POTATO

Cornstarch 2% · Fat 4% (toss), and squeeze out **~30% of the grated weight in water** first. Dryness is the whole game — weigh it if unsure.

Kit: half-sheet pan · food processor (grating disc) · box grater · clean towel · scale · sturdy spatula

METHOD

- Preheat hard.** Oven **230°C (450°F)** with the sheet pan *inside*.

A preheated steel pan crisps the base by conduction, like a skillet; the oven frees your hands and browns the top. — McGee 2004

- Grate & rinse.** Grate 2000g potato (processor disc). Rinse in cold water until it runs clear; drain.

Rinsing removes loose surface starch that turns gummy; the bound starch inside still holds it together. — López-Alt

- Salt, rest, squeeze BONE-DRY.** Toss with 12g salt, stand 10 min, squeeze hard in a towel (in batches). Target ~30% lighter.

Salt pulls water by osmosis; the squeeze removes the rest. Water → steam → soggy. This step makes or breaks it. — McGee; López-Alt

- Coat.** Toss dry potato with 30g cornstarch, 60g melted fat, pepper (+ onion/paprika).

A thin cornstarch film gelatinises then dehydrates into a glassy, shatter-crisp shell. — López-Alt; Modernist

- Press on the hot pan.** Pull pan, add 40g oil + swirl, spread an even ~1.5 cm layer and **press firm**. It should sizzle.

- Bake, flip once.** ~20 min to deep-gold base, flip the slab in sections, ~12–15 min more to crisp both sides.

Done: deep golden-brown, lacy crisp edges, tender inside. **Season the hot crust, cut 12 squares, serve at once** — crisp fades as it sits.

Efficiency & service — one slab, not patties: grate in the processor, one squeeze, one press, one flip. Par-bake to pale-gold ahead, then finish-crisp to order — minutes to plate across a staggered crew breakfast.

ONE POTATO, TWO DISHES — BERNESE RÖSTI

Same squeezed, dry potato — but skip the cornstarch and bake. Melt **butter** in a hot heavy skillet, press the potato into a **cake**, crisp covered **8 min**, slide onto a plate and **invert back** to crisp the second face. *The farmhouse original — no oven, one pan.*

ELEVATION

TIER 1 — NO EXTRA TIME

- Smoked paprika + pepper** — in the toss
- Grated onion** — squeezed dry, folded in
- Parmesan lid** — 40g, last 5 min

TIER 2 — WORTH IT

- Duck fat** — swap the toss fat
- Gruyère rösti** — 150g folded through
- Everything-bagel crust** — scattered on top

TIER 3 — SERVICE

- Fried egg + crème fraîche**
- Brown-butter** toss fat
- Confit-then-crisp** for guest plating

TROUBLESHOOT

Gummy / gluey	Surface starch left in → rinse till water runs clear
Pale, steamed	Too wet / pan cold → squeeze harder; preheat fully
Sticks & tears	Not enough hot oil → swirl 40g in first; let the base set before flipping
Crisp then soft	Held too long → serve at once; re-crisp hot, uncovered

CHARTER PREP & STORAGE

Best route	Par-bake the slab pale-gold ahead; finish-crisp to order
Squeezed potato	Use promptly — toss with the fat to slow browning
Par-baked slab	1 day fridge; re-crisp 230°C
Frozen	1 mo par-baked; crisp from frozen at 230°C
Never	Cover or hold hot — steam kills the crust