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## Funeral Potatoes

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## **Funeral Potatoes Foodways**

### **Informant:**

Christine Cole is my college roommate and friend. She is 21 years old and is studying elementary, early childhood, and special education at Utah State University. She was born in Salt Lake City, Utah and moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico when she was two years old. Christine is an active member of the LDS church. Her mother is also LDS, but her father is Methodist. Throughout high school Christine played the oboe and saxophone in concert and marching bands. Christine has a deep interest in all things supernatural and aspires to go ghost hunting. Her other interests include reading, volunteering, and all things comic book.

### **Context:**

I interviewed Christine after we had been talking about Thanksgiving. It was the week of Thanksgiving and we were both leaving to celebrate with our families. We were having a conversation about the different foods that we make and eat on Thanksgiving. I made the remark that I had never heard of Funeral Potatoes prior to attending school in Utah and Christine told me that it was a family favorite of hers. I conducted the interview in our kitchen as we were making dinner one evening. It was a casual conversation in our well-lit kitchen. The informant texted her mother for pictures of the recipes that they use to be able to reference and remember exactly how their funeral potatoes are made.

Christine's family eats funeral potatoes whenever they want, but they know people who make them for occasions such as weddings or funerals. The informant has no idea what the origin of funeral potatoes is, only that they are common among LDS and Utah families. Christine's family took recipes from two other people and combined and changed them to suit their family better.

### **Text:**

We use two different recipes for Funeral potatoes because we like aspects of each. From Michelle with two Ls [recipe card with hearts at the bottom and the name Michelle C. Bitton at the top] we take the use of shredded potatoes because we like them better than the diced potatoes. We also always used cream of Chicken soup and not cream of mushroom. We don't use green onions instead we use the grated onion from Michele with one L [the recipe that is brown around the edges titled Funeral Potatoes]. Sometimes we refrigerate before baking and sometimes we don't, it really depends on if we feel like waiting. Also, we never use corn flakes, we always just use breadcrumbs. We all hate cornflakes. Other than that, we follow the recipe pretty much exactly.

A Favorite Recipe From Michelle C. Bitton

For: As Gratin Potatoes

Makes: \_\_\_\_\_

6 or 7 potatoes, cooked skinned + shredded (or hash browns)  
1/4 c. butter

2 c. cr of chicken soup or 1 chicken 1 mushroom

1 pt sour cream

1 1/2 c. shredded sharp cheddar cheese

1/3 c. chopped gr. onion

Mix everything together except potatoes. Refrigerate  
overnight.

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Mix with potatoes and place in casserole dish.  
Top with: 1c. cornflake crumbs  
2T melted butter  
Bake at 350° 1hr or until heated through.

[recipe from Michelle with two Ls]

## Funeral potatoes

- \* 6 c. diced potatoes
- \* 1 can (10 3/4 oz.) condensed cream of chicken soup
- \* 1 stick butter, melted
- \* 1 c. sour cream
- \* 2 c. cheddar cheese, grated, divided
- \* 1/4 c. grated onion (optional)\* Salt and pepper to taste
- \* 3/4 c. crushed cornflakes (optional for crumb topping)
- \* Additional 3 T. butter (optional for crumb topping)

1. Prepare the potatoes: Scrub 6-8 medium russet potatoes and wrap in foil. Bake the potatoes in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until they are easily pierced with a fork but not too tender. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel and dice them. If you want, you can substitute plain frozen diced (not shredded) potatoes. Let the potatoes thaw before using them in the recipe.
2. Combine soup, butter, sour cream, cheese, onion, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl. Mix well. Add the diced potatoes and stir gently until combined.
3. Place potato mixture in a 2-3 quart casserole dish or 9 x 13-inch baking pan.
4. Optional: Mix 3 tablespoons butter with crushed corn flakes and sprinkle over the potato mixture.
5. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 30-45 minutes or until hot and bubbly.

[recipe from Michele with one L]

### Texture:

It was clear that Funeral Potatoes are a dish that Christine and her family are fond of. The recipe from Michele with one L is worn, and when Christine texted her mom for the recipe she received pictures within 5 minutes. She was very opinionated about what parts of the recipe needed to be adjusted and why. Christine laughed as she explained the changes her family has made to the recipe, perhaps recounting why the changes were originally made.

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Introduction to Folklore  
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