Verena's potato salad

500g Pink Fir or Charlotte (or other waxy) potatoes
75ml olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped (125g)
1 garlic clove, crushed
175ml chicken stock
2 tsp Dijon mustard
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
½ tsp black peppercorns, coarsely crushed in a pestle and mortar
15g chives: 10g finely chopped and 5g cut into 1½cm lengths
75g pack of diced smoked pancetta
1 tsp paprika
¼ cucumber, sliced lengthways, deseeded and cut into ½cm dice (100g)
salt

Growing up in Germany, Verena remembers two camps when it came to potato salad: camp mayo and camp oil/broth. This is an oil/broth-based version, more prevalent in the southern parts of Germany, specifically Swabia and Bavaria. It's less heavy and claggy than the mayo variety and gets its creaminess from the starch released by the potatoes as they sit for a couple of hours in the warm broth. We've strayed from tradition and added some pancetta (because, why not . . .) and a welcome freshness from some chopped cucumber.

Serves 4

Put the potatoes into a medium saucepan, for which you have a lid. Add just enough water to cover, salt generously and place on a medium-high heat. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, covered, for 20–25 minutes, until just tender. Drain and, once cool enough to handle, remove the skins from the potatoes and slice into ½cm-thick rounds. Set aside in a medium bowl.

Put 2 tablespoons of the oil into a medium sauté pan and place on a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 12–15 minutes, stirring regularly, until caramelised. Add the garlic and stock, bring to a simmer, then remove from the heat. Add the mustard, vinegar, 1¼ teaspoons of salt, the pepper and another 2 tablespoons of oil. Whisk to combine, then pour the mixture over the potatoes. Mix gently but thoroughly: it will look wet (and some of the potatoes will break up), but this is normal. Set aside for about 2 hours, for the potatoes to soak up about half the broth, and then stir in the finely chopped chives.

Meanwhile, wipe clean the sauté pan and place on a medium-high heat. Add the pancetta, reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the pancetta is crispy. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper – leave about 1 tablespoon of the fat in the pan – and set aside. Once cool, finely chop the pancetta into crumbs.

Add the remaining tablespoon of oil to the fat in the pan, along with the paprika. Stir for 30 seconds or so, until fragrant, then remove from the heat.

When ready to serve, fold the cucumber into the potato salad and transfer to a serving plate. Scatter over the pancetta crumbs, along with the cut chives. Spoon over the paprika oil and serve.

