

Potatoes

Choosing, Storing, Preparing, and Enjoying

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Potatoes are nutritious and versatile. They can be prepared in a variety of ways. Potatoes also support our health. They are often found fresh, frozen, and canned. Consider the points below when choosing, storing, and preparing your potatoes so you can enjoy them and reap the benefits.

Choosing Potatoes

When selecting potatoes, look for:

- Firm, unbruised skin
 - Free of blemishes including sprouts or green coloring
- There are more than 200 varieties of potatoes sold in the United States. The type of potato to choose depends on how you plan to use it. Additional considerations for choosing potatoes include:
- Red or new potatoes have a higher moisture content and are known as “waxy” types that are best boiled for use in scalloped potatoes or potato salads.
 - Drier potatoes or “mealy” types such as the Kennebec, a common variety grown in Kentucky, are best for baking, French frying, and mashing.
 - Yukon gold potatoes hold up well under heat and are generally all-purpose.
 - Russet potatoes are commonly found in stores and are the standard baking potato. They do not hold up well when boiled, which makes them a good option for mashing.

Storing Potatoes

To extend the life of potatoes, save food dollars, and enjoy the best flavor and texture, consider these storage tips:

- Store potatoes in a cool, humid, and dark location that is well ventilated, such as a pantry.
- Light and high temperatures will cause potatoes to shrivel and sprout. Sprouted potatoes should be discarded.
- Temperatures of 45 degrees and lower, such as in refrigerators, will turn the starch to sugar, causing the potato to darken when cooked.
- Potatoes can be preserved now to be enjoyed later. Check out [FCS 3-583: Home Canning Vegetables](#) to learn more.

Preparing Potatoes

Scrub potatoes under cool running water. Remove the peel if desired or if the recipe calls for it. Once peeled, cook potatoes immediately. If unable to use peeled potatoes immediately, submerge them in a bowl of water and consider adding an acid, like lemon juice, to prevent darkening. Use peeled potatoes within 24 hours. Because soaking potatoes in water can cause vitamin loss, try to use peeled potatoes as quickly as possible.

Potatoes work together with other foods in a balanced eating pattern to support our health in a variety of ways



Table 1. Potato Cooking Methods

Method	Steps to Take
Boil	<p>On stovetop: Bring enough water to cover potatoes to a boil in a saucepan. Cover saucepan and cook medium-sized potatoes for approximately 30-40 minutes.</p> <p>In microwave: Peel potatoes if desired and cut into desired shapes. Place potatoes in a casserole dish with the bottom covered with water and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cover. Microwave on high for 4-8 minutes for 4 medium potatoes that are 1-inch cubed, slightly longer for 1/4 inch slices or quarters. The potatoes should be fork tender. Stir halfway through.</p>
Steam	<p>Cut medium-sized potatoes into quarters. Bring one inch of water to a boil in a saucepan. Place the potatoes on a rack or in a basket in the pan. Do not immerse in water. Cover tightly and steam potatoes for approximately 15-20 minutes</p>
Bake	<p>Scrub potatoes, leaving the skin on. Pierce the skin with a fork so steam will escape, preventing the potato from bursting. Bake at 400 degrees F for 45 minutes to 1 hour.</p>
Microwave	<p>Scrub potatoes, leaving the skin on. With a fork pierce the skin no more than 1/4" deep. Arrange potatoes on a paper towel, one inch apart. Microwave on high for 4-6 minutes per potato, turning halfway through.</p> <p>Remove from microwave when finished and cover with foil. Let stand 5 minutes.</p>

Enjoying Potatoes

Potatoes are available fresh, which requires some preparation. They are also available canned, often in peeled, whole, and diced options. Canned potatoes provide the nutrients of fresh potatoes but may be more convenient, accessible and a budget-friendly option for recipes. Choose “low sodium” or “no salt added” versions and consider the added liquid in the cans when using in recipes. Frozen potatoes are convenient and often are shredded or diced, requiring less preparation than fresh. Be mindful of the sodium and saturated fat content of these varieties.

Recipes

Beef and Broccoli Stuffed Potatoes

Yield: 4 servings

- 4 large potatoes, baked
- 8 ounces lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 10-ounce package frozen chopped broccoli
- 1 cup low-fat shredded cheddar cheese

Directions

- In a skillet, cook ground beef over medium heat, breaking up beef until coarsely chopped; cook until no pink remains.
- Drain fat off browned beef. Return ground beef to skillet; add onion powder, garlic, and frozen broccoli. Cover and cook beef and broccoli mixture for 8-10 minutes over medium heat.
- Sprinkle cheese over mixture; cover pan until cheese melts.
- To serve, place one baked potato on each plate; cut potatoes widely open. Top each potato with one-fourth of the beef broccoli mixture. Serve and enjoy.

Per serving: 520 calories; 13 grams fat; 65 milligrams cholesterol; 280 milligrams sodium; 71 grams carbohydrates; 34 grams protein

Red-Potato Salad

Yield: 16 servings

- 6 medium red potatoes cut into 1½ inch pieces
- 4 cups fresh green beans cut into 1½ inch pieces
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup chopped cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons fresh oregano
- Salt and pepper

Directions

- Wash vegetables in water.
- Boil potatoes until tender and drain. Boil green beans until tender crisp and drain.
- Place potatoes and green beans in a bowl. Add chopped red onions, peppers and tomatoes.
- In a small bowl, mix mayonnaise, red wine vinegar, and chopped oregano. Add to potato mixture and mix lightly.
- Season with salt and pepper. Mix well. Serve cold.

Per serving: 140 calories; 1.5 grams fat; 0 milligrams cholesterol; 35 milligrams sodium; 26 grams carbohydrate; 5 grams protein

Chicken and Dumpling Soup

Yield: 10 servings

- 2/3 cups cooked chicken, cubed
- 4 carrots
- 3 stalks of celery
- 3 medium potatoes
- 1/2 yellow onion
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 (32-ounce) boxes of low sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups frozen peas
- 1 (12-ounce) package frozen dumplings
- Salt and pepper, optional

Directions

- Chop vegetables into bite sized cubes; chop onion and garlic finely.
- In a large soup pot, heat olive oil over medium-high heat and sauté the onion and garlic until tender. Add the carrots, celery and potatoes and stir for a few minutes, being careful not to burn them.
- Pour in the broth and bring to a boil. Add dumplings, a few at a time. Turn down heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring often, until the vegetables have softened.
- Add chicken and raise heat to medium-low for 10 minutes. Add frozen peas during the last five minutes.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.

Per serving: 220 calories; 5 grams fat; 35 milligrams cholesterol; 200 milligrams sodium; 23 grams carbohydrate; 19 grams protein

Potato Hash

Yield: 12 servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 pounds petite red or gold potatoes, diced to ½-inch cubes
- 2 diced onions
- 2 diced red bell peppers
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese

Directions

- Heat olive oil and butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat.
- Add potatoes and toss to coat with oil. Cover and cook for 10 minutes, stirring from time to time.
- Add onion and peppers. Cook for an additional 5 minutes or until golden brown.
- Add garlic and cook for 2 more minutes.
- Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

Per serving: 160 calories; 4.5 grams fat; 5 milligrams cholesterol; 75 milligrams sodium; 26 grams carbohydrate; 4 grams protein

References

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Resources

For information about growing produce, check out NEP's Growing Your Own Garden series at <https://www.planeatmove.com/get-moving/growing-your-own-garden/>.

Potatoes can be found [here](#).

For more information on using your fresh potatoes, consider Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud recipes <https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/plate-it-kentucky-proud>.

The recipes listed can be found at [Plan.Eat.Move.com](https://www.planeatmove.com) where you can find additional recipes using potatoes.

For more information on preserving food, check with your local county Extension office.

This publication is revised from *Vegetables for Wellness: Kentucky Potatoes*, originally written by Sandra Bastin.

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