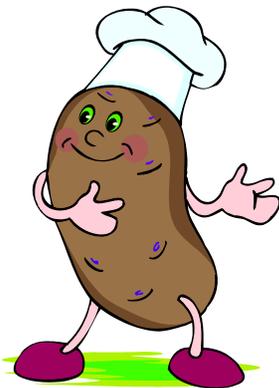


The Incredible...
The Edible...
The Amazing...



POTATO!


discover the chef in you™

The "Low Down" and "Dirty"

The potato...the spud...the tater...the tuber. However you say it or however you spell it...it's fat-free, nutritious and I think it's a beautiful thing. You can boil them, bake them, mash them, and fry them. But, did you know that potatoes can be used to make starch flour and are the source for vodka and aquavit? You'll be surprised about everything you didn't know about the potato.

THE HISTORY

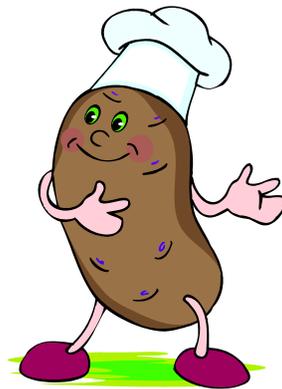
The Indians in Peru were the first people to cultivate the potato over 4000 years ago. The Andean Mountains of South America is the birthplace of the "Irish" white potato. The Symara Indians developed over two hundred varieties at elevations of over 10,000 feet over sea level.

The potato, a name derived from the American Indian word "Batata", was introduced to Europeans by Spanish conquerors during the late 16th Century. At first, potatoes were not initially accepted by Europeans. Some claimed potatoes were not mentioned in the bible, while others attributed some common diseases to potatoes.

Potatoes first became popular when Marie Antoinette paraded in France wearing a crown of potato blossoms. An 18th century potato grower used reverse psychology to boost the vegetable's popularity in France. He posted guards around potato fields by day and left them unattended at night, thus tempting thieves to steal the "precious" commodity.

Captain Nathaniel Butler, Governor of Bermuda sent a cargo of potatoes to Francis Wyatt, governor of Virginia in 1621. This is the first time potatoes arrived in North America.

In 1845 and 1846 the potato crop in Ireland was devastated by fungus. The potato had become a major food to the Irish causing the "Irish Potato Famine" which caused many Irish to immigrate. The population of Ireland decreased by nearly two million between 1847 and 1851.



Did you know that...

Russet is the most common potato found in your grocery store.

potato produces more food per acre than any other crop.

Mr. Potato Head has been sold since 1952. He was married in 1953 to Mrs. Potato Head. Baby Potato Head was born in 1955.

The Guinness Book of Records states that in 1993 a 30 lb. potato was grown in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - big enough to make 150 servings of French Fries!!

“Spud” is the name of the tool once used to weed the potato patch.

The average baked potato provides the recommended daily intake of riboflavin (vitamin B-2), three to four times the necessary amount of thiamin (vitamin B-1), and niacin (vitamin B-3), one and a half times the quantity of iron, and ten times the amount of vitamin C.

The average baked potato has almost no fat or salt and offers more potassium than a banana.



Bet you didn't know that...

total U.S. potato area harvested in 1998 was 1.388 million acres.

potato is grown in more countries than any crop but corn.

potato is the 4th most important food crop after rice, wheat and corn.

potato was the first vegetable grown in space.

potato is about 80% water and 20% solid.

Irish Spalding first planted potatoes in Idaho in 1837.

"French Fries" were introduced to America when Thomas Jefferson served them at a Whitehouse dinner.

potatoes are a powerful aphrodisiac, says a physician in Ireland.

The average American eats 140 pounds of potatoes per year. Germans eat more than 200 pounds per year.

The "Perfect" Potato

Choosing: All potatoes should be firm, well-shaped (for their type) and blemish-free. New potatoes may be missing some skin but other types should not have any bald spots. Avoid potatoes that are wrinkled, sprouted or cracked.

Green Potatoes: A green tinge--indicative of prolonged light exposure--is caused by the alkaloid "solanine", which can be toxic if eaten in quantity. This bitter green portion can be cut or scraped off and the potato used in the normal fashion.

Storing: Store potatoes in a cool, dark, well ventilated place for up to 2 weeks. New potatoes should be used within 3 days of purchase. Refrigerating potatoes causes them to become sweet and turn dark when cooked. Warm temperatures encourage sprouting and shriveling.

Freezing: Peel, wash, and slice potatoes; plunge into boiling water for two minutes, rinse thoroughly in cold water, dry and pack into plastic bags to freeze; can be frozen up to three months.

The "Sweet" Potato

There are many varieties of sweet potato, but the two that are widely grown commercially are a pale sweet potato and the darker-skinned variety that Americans erroneously call "yam" (the true yam is not related to the sweet potato).

The pale sweet potato has a thin, light yellow skin and a pale yellow flesh. Its flavor is not sweet and after being cooked, the pale sweet potato is dry and crumbly, much like a white baking potato. The darker variety has a thicker, dark orange skin and a vivid orange, sweet flesh that cooks to a much moister texture.

Fresh sweet potatoes are available sporadically throughout the year, though not as readily during the summer months. Canned and frozen sweet potatoes are available year-round and are sometimes labeled as yams. When buying fresh sweet potatoes choose those that are small- to medium-sized with smooth, un-bruised skins.

Sweet potatoes don't store well unless the environment is just right, which is dry, dark and around 55 degrees F. Under perfect conditions they can be stored for 3 to 4 weeks. Otherwise, store in a cool, dark place and use within a week of purchase. Do not refrigerate. Sweet potatoes--particularly the pale variety--can be substituted for regular potatoes in most recipes. They can be prepared in a variety of ways including baking, boiling and sautéing.

Which Potato to Choose

The potato can be divided into four basic categories: russet, long white, round white and round red.

Russet Potato: Also called *Russet* and *Idaho*. It is long, slightly rounded and has brown, rough skin and many eyes. Its low moisture and high starch content make it excellent for baking and for French fries.

Long White Potato: Similar in shape to russets, but Long Whites have thin, pale gray-brown skins with almost imperceptible eyes. They're sometimes called *White Rose* or *California Long Whites*. Long Whites can be baked, boiled or fried.

Finger Potatoes: Thumb-sized baby Long Whites.

Round White and Round Red Potato: Also called *Boiling Potatoes*. They're almost identical, but the Round White has a freckled brown skin and the Round Red a reddish-brown coat. They both have waxy flesh with less starch and more moisture than the Russet and Long White. This makes them better suited for boiling than baking (they're both commonly used to make mashed potatoes). They're also good for roasting and frying.

Yukon Gold Potato: Skin and flesh ranges from buttery yellow to golden. These boiling potatoes have a moist, almost succulent texture and make excellent mashed potatoes.

All Blue Potato: Range in color from bluish purple to purple-black. They have a dense texture and are good for boiling. Other purple potatoes have skins that range from lavender to dark blue and flesh from white to beige with purple streaking.

Red-Fleshed Potato: Among the red-fleshed potatoes are the *Huckleberry* (red skin and flesh) and the *Blossom* (pinkish-red skin and flesh).

New Potato: Young potatoes of any variety. They haven't converted their sugar fully into starch and consequently have a crisp, waxy texture and thin, undeveloped skins. New potatoes are small enough to cook whole and are excellent boiled or pan-roasted. Because they retain their shape, new potatoes are particularly suited for potato salad. The season for new potatoes is spring to early summer.

The Baked...

The Perfect Baked Potatoes

Heat oven to 350 degrees and position racks in top and bottom thirds.

Wash potato (or potatoes) thoroughly with a stiff brush and cold running water.

Dry, then using a standard fork poke 8 to 12 deep holes all over the spud so that moisture can escape during cooking.

Place in a bowl and coat lightly with oil. Sprinkle with Kosher Salt and place potato(es) on baking sheet in middle of oven.

Bake 1 hour or until skin feels crisp but flesh beneath feels soft.

Serve by creating a dotted line from end to end with your fork, then crack the spud open by squeezing the ends towards one another. It will pop right open. But watch out, there will be some steam.

NOTE: If you're cooking more than 4 potatoes, you'll need to extend the cooking time by up to 15 minutes.

the Fried...

The Perfect French Fried Potatoes

3 pounds potatoes

Shortening or oil for deep fat frying

Salt and pepper

Peel potatoes, one at a time, cut into strips the length of the potato and 1/4-inch wide, letting each fall into cold water. When all the strips are cut, soak 10 minutes in cold water. Drain and pat dry on paper toweling.

First Frying: Heat shortening or oil to 330 degrees, add potatoes, about 1 cup at a time, and fry 2 minutes until lightly golden and all sputtering stops. Drain on paper toweling. Potatoes can now be held until just before serving.

Second Frying: For the second frying, heat fat to 375 degrees, and fry, on third of the potatoes at a time, 5 minutes until crisply golden.

and the Mashed!

The Perfect Mashed Potatoes

4 russet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
8 red potatoes, cut into chunks roughly the same size as the russet chunks
1 to 2 teaspoons kosher salt
3/4 cup low fat buttermilk (not skim)
1/4 cup heavy cream

Combine potatoes in a large pot and just cover with hot tap water. Place over high heat and season water with 1 to 2 teaspoons of salt, (it should taste like sea water). Cover the pot and bring to a boil.

Meanwhile, combine dairy and garlic in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Keep this mixture barely simmering until the potatoes are done.

As soon as the water comes to a boil, remove the lid and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until a potato chunk can easily be crushed with a pair of tongs. Drain, then return potatoes to the pan, return pot to heat and shake for 30 seconds so the surface water can evaporate. Remove pot and set on a towel or hot pads. Pour about half the dairy mixture into the potatoes and mash with an old-fashioned potato masher. Start tasting and looking at the consistency right away. If mashers seem dry or bland, add more of the dairy mixture. Avoid over mashing or you'll end up with glue instead of fluffy

NOTE: Great mashed potatoes hate recipes. Although the above amounts will make a fine mash, you're better off with these simple formulas. Try to hit a 2 to 1 ratio of russets to reds (by weight), and have at least 1/4 cup of dairy per pound of potatoes. You may not use it all, but it's good to know it's there.

Variation: Add 6-8 peeled garlic cloves to dairy mixture while simmering.

And now for THE YUMMIES!

In researching the information for this booklet, I came across some absolutely delicious sounding recipes. I thought I would share them with you for some fun, creative, and different ideas...ENJOY!

Au Gratin Potatoes

Yield: 6 servings

2 pounds potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced (about 5 cups)
2 tbsp. melted butter
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
1/4 cup fresh bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
Lightly grease shallow 1 1/2 quart casserole with butter; arrange sliced potatoes in layers.
Sprinkle with melted butter, salt and pepper; top with grated cheddar cheese and bread crumbs.
Bake 30 minutes, uncovered.
Uncover and bake an additional 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

Sweet Potato Fries

Cooking spray
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
Coat a large baking sheet with cooking spray.
Arrange potato wedges on prepared baking sheet in 1 layer and coat them with cooking spray.
Sprinkle potatoes with salt and black pepper.
Roast 30 minutes, until tender and golden brown.

Variation: If preparing in advance, fill a medium saucepan 3/4 full with water and bring to a boil. Add the potato wedges and boil for 5 to 7 minutes, or until just beginning to get tender. Drain well. When you plan to serve them, bake par-boiled potatoes at 400 degrees F until golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Loaded Baked Potato Salad

Yield: 2 quarts

4 pounds potatoes, peeled
1 pound bacon, crisply cooked, and chopped into 1/2 -inch pieces
(fat reserved, if desired)
4 ounces unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup chopped green onions
2 cups grated or shredded cheddar cheese
1 1/2 cups sour cream (regular or low -fat)
1 tbsp. black pepper
1 tsp. salt

Cook whole potatoes in boiling, unsalted water until tender; refrigerate until chilled, then chop into one-inch pieces.

Transfer potatoes to large bowl along with remaining ingredients and thoroughly combine. Add some reserved bacon fat if desired.

Chill at least 2 hours before serving. Adjust seasoning prior to serving.

NOTE: Any condiments or toppings typically added to a loaded baked potato may be used for this recipe.

Baked Mashed Potatoes

Yield: 6 servings

4 medium potatoes, cooked
1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1/4 cup milk
2 eggs, beaten
2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1/4 cup grated strong Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Mash potatoes with mayonnaise, sour cream, milk, eggs, and mustard.

Spoon into a greased ovenproof dish and top with cheese. Bake 20 -30 minutes or until the cheese bubbles.

Variations:

Replace mayonnaise with 1 cup sour cream and 1/2 cup milk; or
Sprinkle 4 slices diced and cooked bacon on top with the cheese.

Lemon Potato Fans

Yield: 4 servings

4 large potatoes
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
3 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1/2 tsp. paprika
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1 tbsp. lemon juice
2 tsp. lemon rind



Scrub potatoes and pat dry.

Combine cheese, parsley, paprika and salt in small bowl; set aside.

Cut each potato cross wise into 1/4-inch thick slices, cutting to, but not through, bottom of potato. Allow potatoes to stand in ice water 10 minutes.

Combine butter/margarine, lemon juice and lemon rind in 1-cup microwave-safe measure; microwave, uncovered, at HIGH 30 to 40 seconds, or until butter/margarine is melted.

Drain potatoes and pat dry. Arrange potatoes, cut side up, in 12x8x2-inch microwave-safe baking dish. Brush tops and sides of potatoes with butter/margarine mixture.

Cover with microwaveable plastic wrap and microwave at HIGH 12-14 minutes, or until tender; rearrange potatoes every 6 minutes and brushing with remaining margarine mixture.

Sprinkle potatoes with cheese mixture. Let stand, covered, 5 minutes.

Potato Torte

Yield: 8 servings

1 1/4 pounds potatoes
Salt and pepper
2 tbsp. fresh rosemary, chopped
5 oz. Porcini mushrooms sautéed in olive oil (optional)
4 oz. butter, melted
2 cups veal reduction

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Wash potatoes. Using mandolin, cut potatoes into thin slices. Season with salt, pepper and chopped rosemary.

In non-stick 10-inch straight sided frying pan, layer potatoes, mushrooms, and butter until you reach top of pan.

Place over burner until butter starts to bubble, then place in oven and bake for 30 minutes.

To serve, carefully overturn pan onto plate to remove it. Slice torte as you would a pie and serve in a pool of the reduction.

Re-Peeled Potatoes

Yield: 4 servings

12 peeled potatoes (save peels)
1 tbsp. sweet butter
2 onions
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tbsp. Cajun spice (as purchased)
4 tbsp. chopped chives
Oil for frying

Place peeled potatoes in a large pan with cold water and bring to a simmer. Add a pinch or two of salt and cook until tender. Strain out water and cool potatoes on a plate in the refrigerator.

Heat oil for frying (350 degrees F). Thinly slice onion and toss in all purpose flour.

Fry until golden brown and crispy. Remove and let drain on paper towels.

Fry potato peels until crispy and transfer to a pan lined with paper towels.

In food processor, coarse chop crisp onion and crispy peels. Place in a bowl and toss with Cajun spice. This can be done days in advance.

When ready to serve, heat potatoes in lightly salted water. Melt butter in a sauté pan. Add potatoes to sauté pan and coat well with butter. One by one, coat potatoes with crust. Garnish with chives. Serve immediately.

Salt-Baked Potato

Yield: 4 servings

4-12 oz. potatoes
2-48 ox. Boxes Kosher salt
1 cup cracked black pepper
1/3 cup coriander seeds
8 bay leaves
6 large egg whites

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Wash potatoes and pat dry.

Combine salt, pepper, coriander seeds and bay leaves in a bowl, mixing well.

Reserve 1 cup of salt mixture on the side.

In a large ceramic casserole dish with tall sides, spread a 1 -inch layer of salt mixture evenly on bottom of dish. Place potatoes on top of salt mixture, leaving a 1-inch space between them. Cover potatoes with remaining salt mixture.

In large bowl, whisk egg whites until they become frothy. Add the reserved cup of salt mixture until combined. Pour egg-salt mixture over the salt covered potatoes, spreading evenly. Cover tightly with casserole lid or aluminum foil.

Bake for 2 hours.

Carefully remove potatoes from encrusted salt and serve hot with condiments.

A Note from Your Pampered Chef[®] Consultant

I hope you have enjoyed our little “adventure” into Potato Land. I had a blast researching the information, and learned a lot of new things myself!

If, in your future, you need (or want) any other potato recipes, please do not hesitate to give me a call. I love to cook, and love to share with others!

If you are looking for any other types of recipes, I am just a phone call away for that as well!

Need some entertaining ideas? What about product tips? I'll be glad to help in any way I can!

Thank you for being a part of the fun! I look forward to hearing from you in the future!

