



Potatoes!

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More than 5,000 varieties of potatoes are grown throughout the world. The average person in the U.S. eats 124 pounds of potatoes every year. Potatoes can be used in a wide variety of recipes.

Growing

Plant potatoes when the soil temperature is above 45 F. Before planting, cultivate the soil 6 to 8 inches deep in the spring. If cutting tubers for seed, pieces should weigh 1.5 ounces or more, be about the size of a golf ball and contain two or three eyes. Use a sharp, clean knife to cut whole tubers.

Plant the seed pieces at least 4 inches deep (because potatoes root to 18 inches), 10 to 12 inches apart and in rows 30 to 36 inches apart. For every 100 feet of row, you will need about 15 pounds of seed potatoes. After the plants reach 8 to 12 inches tall, they should be "hilled" by mounding the soil to a height of 3 to 6 inches. This keeps the tubers covered, increases yield and prevents greening. Soil should be kept moist but not wet. Harvest before the first frost.

For more information about growing potatoes, specific potato varieties, pest control and storage, see the NDSU Extension Service publication "Potatoes From Garden to Table" (FN630).

To learn more about preventing greening during storage, see "From Garden to Table: My Potatoes Turned Green. Now What?" (A1768)

Storage and Preservation

Store potatoes in a cool, dark, relatively humid area with good ventilation. Potatoes can be frozen or canned. For safety and quality, follow current, research-tested procedures.



Freezing: Choose new potatoes about 1 to 1½ inches in diameter. Scrub thoroughly. Skins can be left on if you wish. Blanch the potatoes in boiling water for three to five minutes if smaller than 1 to 1½ inches in diameter and eight to 10 minutes if larger. The potato should be heated all the way through. Otherwise, the inside will turn dark. Cool, drain, pack in freezer bags or containers labeled with contents and date, and freeze.

Canning: Potatoes must be pressure canned because they are a low-acid food. Choose small potatoes about 1 to 1½ inches in diameter. Wash and peel the potatoes. Place the potatoes in an ascorbic acid solution prepared according to the manufacturer's directions. Potatoes can be cut into ½-inch cubes and cooked for two minutes in boiling water prior to canning. Boil whole potatoes 10 minutes and drain. Fill jars with the hot potatoes, fresh hot water, and 1 teaspoon of salt per quart, leaving a 1-inch head space. Pressure can pints for 35 minutes and quarts for 40 minutes at 10 pounds of pressure (weighted gauge) or 11 pounds of pressure (dial gauge).

Nutrition

Potatoes are a nutrient-rich food that can be prepared in a wide variety of ways. A medium-sized red potato (about 3 inches in diameter) with skin has 150 calories, 0.3 grams (g) fat, 4 g protein, 34 g carbohydrate, 3.6 g fiber and 38 milligrams sodium. Additionally, potatoes are an excellent source of potassium and vitamin C, and they provide many other vitamins and minerals.

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Recipes

Key to abbreviations

c. = cup

tsp. = teaspoon

Tbsp. = tablespoon

oz. = ounce

g = gram

mg = milligram



Oven Baked Fries

2 large potatoes, cut into wedges

4 tsp. extra-olive virgin oil

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. dried thyme (optional)

Preheat oven to 450 F. Mix the potato wedges with oil, salt and thyme (if using). Spread the wedges on a baking pan. Bake until browned and tender, about 20 minutes. Turn them once halfway through.

Makes five servings. Each serving has 180 calories, 5 g fat, 4 g protein, 32 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 310 mg sodium.

Rosemary Roasted Potatoes

1 pound small, red potatoes

2 Tbsp. olive oil

½ tsp. crushed, dried rosemary

½ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 400 F. Wash potatoes thoroughly. Cut in half. Arrange in shallow pan. Drizzle with olive oil and turn to coat well. Sprinkle with rosemary and salt. Stir to mix well. Bake uncovered, stirring occasionally, until tender (25 to 35 minutes).

Makes four servings. Each serving has 140 calories, 7 g fat, 3 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 290 mg sodium.

Garlic Mashed Potatoes

1 pound red potatoes

½ c. skim milk

2 large garlic cloves, chopped

½ tsp. white pepper

1 Tbsp. fresh chives, chopped (optional)

Peel potatoes, cut into quarters and place in cold, salted water for about 15 minutes. Drain in colander, rinse well and place in a 2-quart saucepan containing 2 cups of boiling water. Cover and cook for 20 to 25 minutes or until tender. Meanwhile, have milk warming over low to medium heat. Add garlic to hot milk and simmer until garlic is soft, about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove cooked potatoes from heat, drain in colander, replace in saucepan and cover to keep warm. Add milk-garlic mixture and white pepper to potatoes, mash with potato masher and then whip with an electric mixer. If desired, garnish with chopped fresh chives.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 100 calories, 0 g fat, 3 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 20 mg sodium.

Funding for this publication was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service through grant AM170100XXXXG005. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

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