



April 2011

Potatoes

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Melanie D. Jewkes, Extension Assistant Professor

Utah Local Fresh Season: Potatoes are harvested in Utah during the early fall, usually mid September through October.

Availability: Potatoes are available year-round in grocery stores.

Eating: It is recommended that potatoes be eaten-cooked, as they are very bitter raw. There is a toxin called solanin that is concentrated in raw, highly green potatoes with a lot of bud tissues. Avoid eating them raw. Maximum nutrition is preserved when cooked and eaten with skin on.

Selecting: Potatoes can be found in the fresh, frozen, and canned aisles of grocery stores. When selecting fresh potatoes, select smooth, firm potatoes free of soft or green spots. The varieties include white, yellow, purple and red. Each variety may have a slightly different flavor or texture, but can be used interchangeably.

Cleaning and Preparing: When ready to use, scrub potatoes with a vegetable brush and rinse. Rinse just before cooking because rinsing potatoes a long time before use will shorten their shelf life.

Storing: Potatoes can be stored up to 2 to 3 months in a dark, cold (40-55°F) place that allows air circulation. Good air circulation will reduce rotting and sprouting. If stored at room temperature, potatoes should be used within 1 to 2 weeks. Perforated plastic bags or paper bags help extend shelf life. Do not store potatoes in a refrigerator, or

the starch will turn sweet and cause the potatoes to darken while cooking. Do not store potatoes with apples or pears, as the ethylene fruit produces will cause them to sprout. If frozen, potatoes can be stored for 10 to 12 months.

Cooking: There are endless possibilities when it comes to preparing and eating potatoes. They can be roasted, baked, boiled, sautéed, grilled, mashed, turned into soup, made into salads, and the list goes on and on. To enhance nutrition benefits, include the skins.

Potatoes can be prepared up to 1 day before cooking. To prevent oxidation (or turning brown) place cut pieces in a large bowl of water with a little lemon juice or vinegar until ready to cook.

Nutrition Highlights: Potatoes are a great source of potassium, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and fiber, and they are fat free. Potassium helps reduce risk of stroke and hypertension. Vitamin C helps maintain healthy gums and helps to heal wounds. Vitamin B6 helps with energy metabolism. Dietary fiber has many benefits, including regulating blood glucose levels and satiety, or feeling full for a longer time.

Growing: When selecting varieties to grow, consider the growing environment, primary use, and how much space is available to grow the plants. Most varieties grow well in Utah, but not all varieties are available. Most garden centers and nurseries carry varieties that produce high quality, productive seed tubers adapted to local conditions.

Preserving: Potatoes can be preserved in jars. Select small to medium-size mature potatoes of ideal quality for cooking. Choose potatoes 1 to 2 inches in diameter if they are to be packed whole.

Procedure: Wash and peel potatoes. Place in an ascorbic acid solution to prevent darkening. If desired, cut into 1/2-inch cubes. Drain. Cook 2 minutes in boiling water and drain again. For whole potatoes, boil 10 minutes and drain. Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill hot jars with hot potatoes and fresh hot water, leaving 1-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel. Adjust lids and process in a pressure canner at 15* pounds of pressure for 35 minutes for pint jars and 40 minutes for quart jars.

*Canner pressure varies depending on the altitude. Check with the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning for more information:

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html

References

1. Drost, D. (2010). *Potatoes in the Garden*, Utah State University Extension, <http://extension.usu.edu/htm/publications/publication=6145>
2. United States Potato Board. Potato Nutrition Handbook, <http://www.potatogoodness.com>
3. <http://www.stilltasty.com>
4. Viva Vegetables, Utah State University Extension, <http://extension.usu.edu/fsne>

Guide Editors: Heidi LeBlanc and Debra Christofferson

Additional Editors: Marie Stosich, Gayla Johnson, Eileen Milligan

Potato Pizza Wedges

Recipe adapted from Potato Kids

4 russet potatoes
1/4 cup olive or canola oil
1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
Pizza toppings of your choice

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Bake potatoes for about an hour. When cool, cut into 6 wedges. Spoon out the middle portion to make mashed potatoes later, leaving only a little bit of the white part on the skin. In a small bowl, stir together the oil, oregano and garlic powder. Arrange the 24 skins in rows cut-side up, peel-side down on a baking sheet. Coat the tops of the wedges with the oil/oregano mixture. Cook for 10 minutes. Sprinkle your favorite pizza topping over the wedges. Cook for 5 more minutes.

Spicy Hash Browns

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon paprika
3/4 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon pepper
6 cups diced baking potato
Cooking spray
Aluminum foil

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine all the ingredients in a plastic zip top bag and seal. Squish contents in a bag around until potatoes are covered in seasonings and oil. Line a cookie sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray. Spread potatoes on sheet in a single layer. Bake at 400° F for 30 minutes or until browned. Serve immediately.

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University. (FN/FoodSense/2011-10pr)