

# Potatoes

## History

The Inca Indians in the Andes Mountains cultivated potatoes as early as 500 B.C. The Spaniards found the lowly spud in Peru in the 16th century. For several years after the introduction of the potato to Europe, it was grown only in the flower gardens in England and was fed only to livestock. The French were the first to finally accept them as food fit for human consumption.

## Varieties

Potatoes are classified into two basic groups – waxy and mealy. Waxy potatoes, such as Katahdin and Red Pontiac, are moist and are best used in salads and for boiling and mashing. Mealy potatoes, such as Kennebec and Norkotah, are dry and are best used for baking and making french fries.

## Buying & Storage Tips

- Purchase potatoes that are firm, well-shaped and smooth with few eyes. Reject potatoes with large cuts, cracks, bruises, decay, sprouting eyes or shriveling.
- Avoid green potatoes because they contain solanine, a substance which causes a bitter flavor and even illness if enough is eaten.
- A pound of potatoes has 3 to 4 medium potatoes and yields 3 cups peeled and sliced, 2½ cups peeled and diced, 2 cups mashed or 2 cups of french fries.
- Store potatoes in a well-ventilated, cool, dark area. Potatoes last 2 weeks at 60°F and high humidity, but can be stored for 4 months at 40°F.

## Preparation Tips

- Potatoes cooked in iron cookware will turn a blue-gray color.
- Peeled potatoes turn dark quickly if not cooked immediately. To avoid this, toss with a little lemon juice. Prolonged soaking in cold water is not recommended because it can result in the loss of water-soluble vitamins.
- In general, you should not freeze potatoes because they become mushy. When freezing combination meals, omit potatoes until just before serving.

- Avoid storing potatoes in the refrigerator. The cool temperature favors the accumulation of sugar, giving the potato a sweet flavor and dark color when cooked.
- Avoid storing potatoes in the light because they will turn green.

## Nutrition Information

Potatoes are an important source of fiber and many nutrients, including vitamin C, an antioxidant that may reduce your risk of heart disease and certain cancers; and potassium, a mineral that helps maintain healthy blood pressure.

### 1 medium potato, plain, baked with skin

Calories: 129	Sodium: low (24 mg)
Fat: 0.2 g	Potassium: very high (952 mg)
Protein: 4.5 g	Vitamin C: 14 mg
Carbohydrate: 37 g	Fiber: 4 g
Iron: 2 mg	



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Potatoes are low in fat and sodium and very high in potassium. They are an important source of other nutrients including vitamin C, niacin, folate and iron.

# Recipes

## Spring Nicoise Potato Salad

Servings: 4 Ready Time: 30 minutes

### Ingredients

8 small red potatoes, uniform in size (about 1 pound)  
1 6-ounce can white tuna in water, drained  
12 steamed asparagus spears  
8 radishes  
½ cup pitted kalamata olives  
2 tablespoons minced red onion  
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, chives, basil and/or garlic  
4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

Leave skin on potatoes, scrub, cut in quarters and place in large pot; pour over enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil 10 minutes, or until potatoes are tender; drain. Arrange potatoes on platter with tuna, asparagus, radishes, olives and onion. In small bowl, whisk vinegar, parsley and oil; drizzle over salad. Season with salt and pepper.

### Nutrition Facts:

Calories: 223	Protein: 15g
Total Fat: 7g	Carbohydrate: 26 g
Saturated Fat: 1 g	Fiber: 4g
Cholesterol: 13 mg	Sodium: 321mg

## Herbed Roasted Potatoes

6 servings Total Time: 45 minutes

### Ingredients

2 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut into ¾-inch chunks  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, such as rosemary, parsley or dill

### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 450°F and place a rack in the upper third of the oven.
2. Place all ingredients in a zip top plastic bag and mix well.
3. Place on baking sheet and roast, turning occasionally with a metal spatula, until golden brown and tender, 30 to 35 minutes. Toss with herbs and serve.

### Nutrition Information Per Serving:

Calories: 141	Protein: 3 g
Fat: 2 g	Carbohydrate: 27 g
Saturated Fat: 0 g	Fiber: 2 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg	Sodium: 202 mg

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