



Produce of the  
Month

# Potatoes

Welcome...



- Inca Indians in Peru were the first to cultivate potatoes about 2,200 years ago.
- In 1536 Spanish Conquistadors conquered Peru, became aware of the potato, and carried them to Europe.
- Before the end of the 16th century, families of Basque sailors began to cultivate potatoes along the Biscay coast of northern Spain.
- Sir Walter Raleigh introduced potatoes to Ireland in 1589 near Cork on the 40,000 acres of land given to him by Queen Elizabeth I in 1581.
- Potatoes arrived in the Colonies in 1621 when the Governor of Bermuda, Nathaniel Butler, sent two large cedar chests containing potatoes and other vegetables to Governor Francis Wyatt of Virginia at Jamestown.
- The first permanent potato patches in North America were established in 1719, most likely near Londonderry (Derry), NH.

- Over the years of cultivation in Ireland, the potato had become the major food source to the Irish population. In 1845-46, a fungus destroyed the potato crops causing the disaster of the Irish Potato Famine.
- During the Alaskan Klondike gold rush, (1897-98) potatoes were practically worth their weight in gold.
- On the South Atlantic Island of Tristan de Cunha, potatoes were once used as the country's unofficial currency. Because of its remoteness, food was the most valuable.
- In October 1995, the potato became the first vegetable to be grown in space. NASA and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, created the technology with the goal of feeding astronauts on long space voyages and eventually feeding future space colonies.

Source: U.S. Potato Board

## Spud Storage and Care

### Storage

Potatoes should be kept in a cool, dark place with good ventilation. The ideal storage temperature is 45 to 50 degrees F. At these temperatures, potatoes will keep for several weeks. But don't store potatoes in the refrigerator! When kept below 40 degrees F, potatoes develop a sweet taste, due to the conversion of starch to sugar. This increased sugar causes potatoes to darken when cooked. If you store potatoes at room temperature, try to use them within a week or so. Keep potatoes away from prolonged exposure to light, which causes them to turn green. This greening causes a bitter flavor. If potatoes develop green areas or start to sprout, just trim off these areas before using.

### Leftovers

It's best to refrigerate any leftovers within two hours of serving to prevent foodborne illnesses. Leftover should be consumed within a few days.

Source: U.S. Potato Board

## Q & A

**Q:** Is it safe to eat the potato skin?

**A:** Absolutely. In fact, we recommend eating potatoes with the skin on, as half the potato's fiber is located in the skin along with some of the potato's other nutrients. Please be sure to wash your potatoes thoroughly, cut away green discoloration and/or sprouts, and enjoy!

**Q:** Is it safe to eat raw potatoes?

**A:** Yes. Some consider raw potatoes a nice treat.

**Q:** How does a potato grow?

**A:** A potato plant is a vine that grows above ground with tubers that grow from the roots under ground.

**Q:** Why do potatoes grow sprouts?

**A:** Sprouts are a sign that the potato is trying to grow. Cut the sprouts away before cooking or eating the potato. To reduce sprouting, store the potatoes in a cool, dry, dark location that is well ventilated.

**Q:** Why do potatoes turn black or grey when cooked?

**A:** When potatoes are stored at too cold of a temperature they can turn black or gray when cooked. To keep this from happening, store potatoes at a temperature between 45 and 55 degrees F. We do not recommend storing your potatoes in the refrigerator, but if you do, letting the potato warm gradually to room temperature before cooking can reduce the discoloration.

Source: U.S. Potato Board



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Get the skinny on  
America's favorite vegetable:



## The Healthy Potato.



Potatoes aren't just good, they're good for you. Just check the label. America's favorite vegetable is naturally fat free, only 100 calories, rich in vitamin C and potassium and a good source of fiber. No wonder leading nutrition experts like Harvard Medical School's Dr. George L. Blackburn and Registered Dietician Ann M. Coulston, past president of the American Dietetic Association, recommend potatoes as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

www.healthypotato.com



## A Tasty Treat To Try At Home



### Mexican Potato Skins

- 4 baking potatoes - baked
- 1 large egg - separated
- 1/4 cup black olives - chopped
- 1/4 cup green onions - sliced
- 2 tbsp cilantro - snipped
- 8 ounces fat free cream cheese - softened
- 1/2 cup lowfat, shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup salsa

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise.
3. Scoop the pulp from each potato and reserve for mashed potatoes.
4. Cut each potato half in half again lengthwise and then place on a baking sheet.
5. Brush potato skins with egg white.
6. Bake the potato skins for 15 to 18 minutes or until crisp.
7. While potato skins are cooking, combine the cream cheese and cilantro in a medium-size bowl.
8. Pipe the cream cheese mixture into the baked potato skins.
9. Top each potato skin with olives, onions, salsa and cheddar cheese.
10. Place the potato skins back in the oven until cheese is melted.

Serves: 4 people

Nutrition Information for 1 serving:  
240 calories  
2 g fat  
570 mg sodium  
3 g fiber

Note: Removing the olives from the recipe changes the nutritional information to:  
230 calories  
1 g fat  
500 mg sodium  
3 g fiber

## True or False

See if you can figure out which statements are true and which ones are false.

1. Like tomatoes and eggplants, potatoes belong to the nightshade family. True or False?
2. Potatoes were originally cultivated in China about 7,000 years ago. True or False?
3. Potatoes were not initially popular in Europe because they were not mentioned in the Bible. True or False?
4. Potatoes contain an unusually high number of calories. True or False?
5. Potatoes produce the most food per unit of water of any major crop. True or False?
6. More potatoes are grown in Idaho than anywhere else on Earth. True or False?
7. Some potatoes are purple. True or False?
8. Potatoes should be frozen to prevent them from getting watery when cooked. True or False?
9. Potatoes can be grown from as far north as Greenland to as far south as Chile. True or False?

Answers: 1-True, 2-False, 3-True, 4-False, 5-True, 6-False, 7-True, 8-False, 9-True

## Quotable Notables

"Only two things in this world are too serious to be jested on, potatoes and matrimony." - Irish saying

"My idea of heaven is a great big baked potato and someone to share it with."  
- Oprah Winfrey

"What I say is that, if a fellow really likes potatoes, he must be a pretty decent sort of fellow."  
- A. A. Milne



### About Our Sponsor

The United States Potato Board (USPB) was established in 1971 by a group of potato growers to promote the benefits of eating potatoes. Recognized as an innovator in the produce marketing industry, the USPB was one of the first commodity groups to promote its product "generically" and to develop

a nutrition label approved by the USDA and FDA. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, the USPB represents more than 3,000 potato growers and handlers across the country.

Through consumer public relations, nutrition education, retail programs, foodservice marketing and export programs, the USPB strives to educate consumers, retailers and culinary professionals about the convenience,

good nutrition and versatility of potatoes.

The USPB is actively involved in educating health care professionals, the media and consumers about the dietary value of the vitamins and minerals found in potatoes.

For more information please visit:  
[www.healthypotato.com](http://www.healthypotato.com)