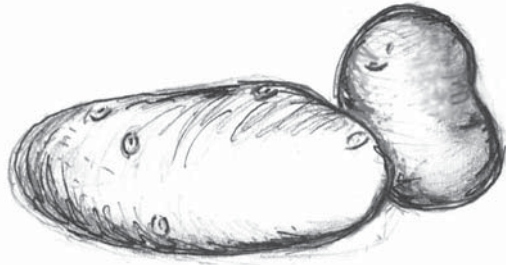


# POTATO



**POTATOES** were first cultivated in Peru, 4500 years ago. Spanish explorers brought potatoes back to Europe and now they are found throughout the world. Many European countries rely heavily on potatoes as their staple crop. In 1845, a disease devastated the potato harvest in Ireland which led to widespread famine forcing many Irish people to leave their country. Potatoes are harvested from the ground in the Northeast from July until early winter, when the ground freezes.



## STORAGE

- ◆ Keep potatoes in a **cool, dark, dry place** that is well ventilated. Sunlight will cause potatoes to turn green (and unfit to eat) and high temperatures will cause sprouting and shriveling.
- ◆ The greener the potato turns, the more solanin (a toxin) it contains. Cut out any green parts before cooking.

## PREPARATION

- ◆ Wash potatoes in cool water, scrubbing with a vegetable brush to remove all dirt.
- ◆ Remove the eyes and any bad spots with the tip of a potato peeler or a sharp knife. Potatoes can be eaten **with or without the peel**. Since most of the potato's nutrients are found in or close to the skin, **leaving peels on during cooking**, or peeling as thinly as possible is an excellent way to maximize the nutrients that your body gets.
- ◆ Potatoes retain more nutrients if cooked whole. To shorten cooking time, however, you may choose to halve, slice or dice the potatoes.
- ◆ Peeled potatoes turn dark if not cooked right away. To prevent discoloration, toss with a bit of lemon juice. Prolonged soaking in water is not recommended as it can result in vitamin loss.
- ◆ Potatoes are one of the most versatile vegetables around. They can be **baked, boiled, steamed, sautéed, fried, mashed, and used in soups, casseroles, breads, etc.**

### ***Nutritional Information***

Potatoes with the skin are high in fiber and vitamin C. They are also a good source of potassium. Adequate intake of fiber is helpful in maintaining low cholesterol levels and aids in digestion. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. Diets containing foods that are a good source of potassium and that are low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

# Potato Recipes

## Algeria's Potato Salad

- 2 pounds new potatoes
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro
- 2 bunches scallions, washed and sliced into 1/8 inch rings
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tablespoons raspberry vinegar (or to taste)
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste



Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring the water to a boil then reduce heat and simmer until the potatoes are cooked through, but not too soft. While potatoes are cooking, wash and dry cilantro, pick leaves from stems and tear leaves (to release their oil) into a bowl. Add scallions and garlic. When potatoes are done, drain and cool until they are barely warm. Cut cooled potatoes into 1/4 inch slices and put them into a large bowl. Sprinkle vinegar onto the warm potato slices. Add cilantro, scallions and garlic drizzle oil over everything. Gently toss salad, taking care not to break up the potatoes. Add salt, pepper and more vinegar if desired. Serve.

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## Oven-Roasted Potatoes

- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon herbs (rosemary, dill, oregano, thyme or basil)
- 1 Tablespoon Italian dressing or Worcestershire sauce
- Potatoes, washed and cut into 1 inch chunks



In a large bowl, combine the oil, garlic powder, herbs and dressing or Worcestershire sauce. Add the potatoes to the bowl and stir to coat them evenly with the sauce. Place the potatoes in a greased roasting pan. Bake at 375 degrees for about 30 minutes. Stir and continue cooking for about 15 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.

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## Potato and Fresh Herb Soup

- 4 Tablespoons butter
- 1 cup diced onions
- 3 cups peeled, diced potatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 teaspoons combined of fresh parsley, thyme, lemon balm and chives (1 1/2 teaspoons if dried)
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 5 cups vegetable stock
- Milk



In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add onions and potatoes, toss until well-coated with butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, cover and cook on low heat for 10 minutes. Add fresh herbs, garlic and soup. Cook until vegetables are soft. Puree soup in a blender or food processor. You can thin out the soup to desired consistency by slowly adding milk. Serve soup sprinkled with freshly chopped herbs, if desired.

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