

# Potato Facts



## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Medium Baked Potato (173g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 160      Calories from Fat 0

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 0g      0%

Saturated Fat 0g      0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg      0%

Sodium 15mg      1%

Total Carbohydrate 37g      12%

Dietary Fiber 4g      16%

Sugars 2g

Protein 4g

Vitamin A 0%      • Vitamin C 30%

Calcium 2%      • Iron 10%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

Calories:      2,000      2,500

Total Fat      Less than 65g      80g

Saturated Fat      Less than 20g      25g

Cholesterol      Less than 300mg      300 mg

Sodium      Less than 2,400mg      2,400mg

Total Carbohydrate      300g      375g

Dietary Fiber      25g      30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

The potato is the world's most widely grown tuber crop and the fourth largest food crop — after rice, wheat, and corn. Native to South America, potatoes have been cultivated for at least 1,800 years and belong to the Solanaceae family.

The potato is a versatile, carbohydrate-rich food highly popular worldwide and prepared in a variety of ways. Freshly harvested, it contains about 80 percent water and 20 percent dry matter. In addition, the potato is fat-free. Potatoes are an important source of several nutrients, especially Vitamin C. A single medium sized potato of 150 g provides nearly half the daily adult requirement (100 mg) of Vitamin C. The potato is a good source of iron and its high Vitamin C content promotes iron absorption. It's also a good source of Vitamin B6, niacin, and potassium.

## Colorado Varieties

- **Russets-** make up most of the Colorado crop and are good for baking, frying, and mashing.
- **Reds-** have a smooth, moist texture perfect for soups and stews because they maintain their shape once cut throughout cooking.
- **Yellows-** have a golden flesh and creamy texture.
- **Specialties-** these include potatoes such as fingerlings, Purple Majesty, or Mountain Rose.

## Selecting potatoes

- Choose potatoes that are well formed, firm, and have relatively smooth skin.
- Avoid green potatoes that have been exposed to light as they may be bitter and high in a chemical called solanine which can be harmful to eat. Trim small green areas from potatoes before cooking.
- Avoid potatoes which have large cuts, bruises, broken skin, or soft spots.

## Storing potatoes

- Do not wash potatoes before storing; dampness promotes early spoilage.
- Store potatoes in a well-ventilated cool, dry, and dark place, ideally between 45-55°F.
- Do not store potatoes in a refrigerator. Temperatures below 45°F will cause the potato starches to convert to sugars, resulting in a sweeter taste and excessive darkening during cooking.

## Nutrition on a Budget

One serving- a medium 5.3 ounce potato will only set you back about \$0.21! Pound for pound, potatoes are one of the best values in the produce section.



## Did you know?

The average American eats 126 pounds of potatoes a year. This includes 53 pounds of frozen, 44 pounds of fresh, 16 pounds of chips, and 13 pounds of dehydrated potato products.

# Colorado Potatoes

## Potato Preparation

Potatoes are sometimes accused of being fattening. By itself, the potato is not fattening. However, frying potatoes in oil or piling them high with butter and sour cream can more than double the calories in a potato product. Another common misconception is that all of a potatoes' nutrients are located in its skin. Approximately half of the dietary fiber is found within the potato itself. As with many other vegetables, the method of cooking can affect the bioavailability of certain nutrients. Nutrient losses are greatest when boiling; water soluble vitamins and minerals will leach out into the cooking water. To maintain the highest nutrition of a cooked potato, steaming or microwaving are best.

## Cooking with Potatoes

- Bake, boil, steam, or microwave cleaned potatoes with the skin on to retain nutrients.
- Use the water the potatoes were cooked in for making gravies or soups, as this water contains valuable nutrients leached from the potatoes.
- Do not allow potatoes to soak in cold water for any length of time. The water soluble nutrients will dissolve into the water.

## Seasonality

Over 100 potato varieties are grown in Colorado with most production located in the San Luis Valley. At 7,600 feet, potatoes grown in the San Luis Valley are among the highest grown in the world! In Colorado, potato harvest begins in September with about 98% of the crop going into storage before being shipped.

## Related Links

Storage of Homegrown Vegetables:

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07601.html>

<http://www.coloradopotato.org/>



## Food Safety Facts & Tips

- In general, potatoes are a safe food to eat. Mishandling prepared potato dishes, such as potato salad, may result in bacterial growth and cause illness.
- 90% of these cases are due to potato salad products. Potato salad provides a perfect breeding ground for harmful bacteria. With plenty of nutrients and proper temperatures, pathogens such as *Salmonella* or *Shigella* can readily grow.
- Wash potatoes thoroughly before cooking. Use clean knives and cutting boards to avoid cross contamination from other ingredients.
- When making your own potato salad, it is best to cool down the cooked potatoes to 41°F BEFORE you mix in other ingredients. Once all ingredients are mixed, place the salad back into the refrigerator immediately until ready to serve.
- Refrigerate any leftovers soon after serving. Do not allow it to stand at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- If heating baked potatoes in foil to serve at a later time, ensure that the potato cools quickly and is stored in the refrigerator until used. Use a thermometer to reheat potatoes to 140°F before eating.