

Colorado Potatoes



Potatoes are one of the world's largest food crops—after rice, wheat, and corn—as well as the most widely grown tuber crop. 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. In addition to being fat-free and gluten-free, potatoes are also a great source of several nutrients, including vitamin B6, niacin, potassium, iron, and vitamin C. In fact, a single medium sized potato provides nearly half the daily adult requirement (100 mg) of vitamin C!

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

Nutrition on a Budget

Pound for pound, potatoes are one of the best values in the produce section at just 25 cents per medium (5.3 oz.) potato!

Did you know?

The average American eats 111 pounds of potatoes a year. This includes 48 pounds of frozen, 34 pounds of fresh, 17 pounds of chips, and 12 pounds of dehydrated potato products.

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 once cut they maintain their shape throughout cooking.
- **Yellows-** have a golden flesh and creamy texture.
- **Specialties-** these include potatoes such as fingerlings, Purple Majesty, or Mountain Rose.

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.

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.

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.
- Potatoes can also be stored frozen, dried or canned.

More about Colorado Potatoes

Preparation

The potato is often accused of being fattening, but by itself is *not* high in calories. 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 the potato's nutrients are located in its skin, but actually the majority (>50 %) 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 because water-soluble vitamins and minerals leach into the cooking water.

Cooking

- Bake, steam, or microwave well-washed potatoes with the skin to retain the most nutrients.
- If you boil potatoes, use the cooking water for making gravies or soups, since it will contain valuable nutrients leached from the potatoes.
- Do not allow potatoes to soak in cold water for any length of time as the water -soluble nutrients will dissolve into the water.

Related Links

• Canning Vegetables

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09348.html>

• Freezing Vegetables

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09330.html>

• Drying Vegetables

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09308.html>



Food Safety Facts & Tips

Potato Salad

In general, potatoes are a safe food to eat, but mishandling prepared potato dishes like potato salad, may result in bacterial growth— including *Salmonella* or *Shigella* which can cause illness.

Because potato salad provides a perfect breeding ground for harmful bacteria:

- Wash potatoes thoroughly before cooking. Use clean knives and cutting boards to avoid cross contamination from other ingredients.
- When making potato salad, it is best to cool 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 leftover potato salad soon after serving. Do not allow it to stand at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Other Cooked Potatoes

- Always unwrap leftover potatoes baked in foil since the foil can potentially create conditions favorable to the growth of *Clostridium botulinum* (botulism).
- Place leftover baked, boiled, or mashed potatoes in shallow containers and refrigerate promptly.

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

