



SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

POTATO

The main potato varieties follow:

Red Skinned (new)
Russet or Idaho
White Rose
Blue
Finnish Yellow Wax
German Fingerling
Rose Fir


The most important distinction to draw between potato varieties is between the starchy or mealy types (best for baking). A starchy type falls apart when boiled; a waxy type does not develop the desired dry, fluffy texture when baked.

When selecting potatoes, look for firm specimens. New potatoes should be of a fairly uniform size to make cooking easier. Mature baking potatoes should be dry and well shaped, without sprouting. Avoid potatoes with a greenish cast.

AVAILABILITY
Potatoes are sold in supermarkets the year around. There is no peak season because crops in different areas mature at different times and potatoes store well.

Because potatoes are so important to the diets of people all around the world, it is difficult to give a meaningful overview of the ways they are used. In the United States, potatoes are typically boiled, mashed, baked, sautéed, or fried. Mashed potatoes may be combined with another pureed vegetable, such as celeriac, chestnuts, or parsnips. Baked potatoes are served whole, with butter and sour cream. Raw potatoes may be sliced thin and sautéed, or grated and sautéed to make hash browns. Cooked, cubed, and sautéed potatoes are often flavored with onion and green pepper and served with breakfast eggs. When potatoes are cut into finger-length strips and deep-fried, they are known as French fries and are a staple of the American fast food industry, especially as the accepted companion to hamburgers.

BASIC BAKED POTATO



Use russet potatoes for baking. Remember to pierce the potatoes just after removing them from the oven. Potatoes cook much faster in a microwave oven, even when you are cooking number of them. They need to be pierced before they cook.

3 large baking potatoes
oil or melted butter, for coating
butter, sour cream, snipped fresh chives

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Rub potatoes all over with oil. Set on baking sheet or directly on oven rack. Bake until tender (about 45 minutes). Immediately pierce with a fork. Slit lengthwise and add desired toppings.

POTATO PANCAKES

Applesauce and sour cream can turn this simple side dish into a satisfying meal. Shred potatoes with a grater or in a food processor fitted with a shredding disk.

3 large baking potatoes, peeled and shredded
1 small onion, minced
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 egg
4 tablespoons dry bread crumbs
1/2 cup vegetable oil for frying
sour cream and applesauce for garnish.

In a large bowl, stir together shredded potatoes, onion, salt, pepper, egg, and bread crumbs. In a medium, heavy-bottomed skillet, heat oil over medium heat. For each pancake, use 2 to 3 tablespoons potato mixture; flatten in skillet to about 1/2 inch thick. Sauté pancakes until crisp and golden brown (12 to 15 minutes); turn and cook second side 6 minutes. Remove from pan and serve with a dollop of sour cream and a scoop of applesauce (if desired).

Serves 6.

SCALLOPED POTATOES

This traditional American dish is a perennial favorite accompaniment to roasts - meat or fowl. It is rich with a garlic flavored cream sauce.

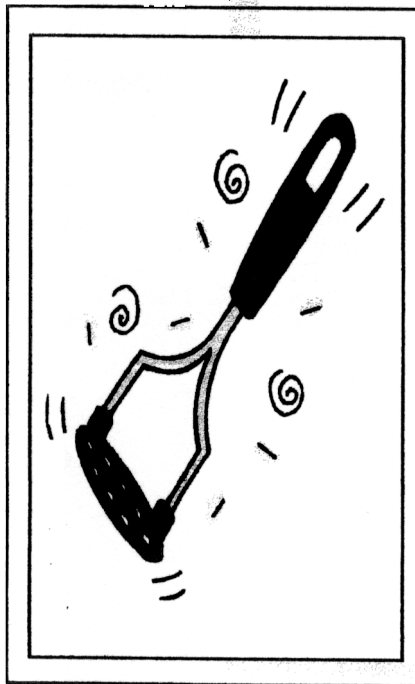
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 1/2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled
2 cups whipping cream
1 cup milk
1 clove garlic, minced (optional)
1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 3-quart baking dish with butter. Slice potatoes 1/8 inch thick; layer in baking dish.

2. In a medium bowl stir together cream, milk, garlic (if used), salt, and pepper. Pour over potatoes and bake until potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife (1 hour and 10 minutes). Serve hot.

Serves 8.



Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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