

**Potatoes  
Sweet Potatoes**

# Seasonal Eating

**February**

## Oven Roasting Potatoes

Oven roasted potatoes are a great way to enjoy the flavor of the potato without all the fat of frying. White or red skinned potatoes can be cut into cubes and roasted with just a little olive oil, salt and pepper. Or you can toss them in dry ranch or Italian dressing mix after a light coating of oil for a zesty version. Another option is to roast until tender then coat with bottled ranch dressing and a little shredded Cheddar cheese on top. Run back into the oven for a few minutes to heat through and melt the cheese. For easy and flavorful steak fries, cut white potatoes into narrow wedges and coat with a little oil and sprinkle with steak seasoning or seasoned salt. You can also sprinkle them with parmesan cheese for cheesy steak fries.

Sweet potatoes are great roasted with a little honey, molasses or maple syrup drizzled over them. Roast just until tender in a 350 degree oven. For sweet potato fries, cut into long narrow strips and toss with a little olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and roast in a single layer at 425 degrees until tender on the inside and browned on the outside, turning when browned on one side.



## Spud Specs

At about 110 calories each, potatoes pack a nutritional punch. Most of the nutrients are found just under the skin, so it is best to eat the skin or peel just the skin away. Boiling in water leaches out the vitamin C so microwaving, steaming or baking is better. Cut into smaller pieces if boiling and use the starch filled water to thicken a sauce or use in soup.

Potatoes	Sweet Potatoes
Fat Free	Fat Free
Cholesterol Free	Cholesterol Free
Low in Sodium	Low in Sodium
Good Source of Potassium (18%)	Good Source of Potassium (15%)
High in Vitamin C (45%)	High in Vitamin C (30%)
	High in Vitamin A (120%)

**Did You Know?**

- The potato is 80% water.
- Potatoes are a budget friendly vegetable at about 25¢ a serving.
- According to USDA, each American eats about 140 pounds of potatoes a year. About 18 pounds of that is in the form of chips.
- North Carolina grows about 40% of the national sweet potato supply.
- Sweet potatoes bruise more easily than white so be gentle!
- Each year over 1 million acres of potatoes are planted. That is like planting the entire state of Rhode Island.

**THIS MONTH I USED THE FEATURED PRODUCE ON THESE DAYS:**

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## Quick Potato Soup

- 1/4 onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 (14 1/2-ounce) cans chicken broth
- 1 can water
- 1 (32-ounce) bag frozen hash brown potatoes (cubed style)
- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of chicken soup
- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of celery soup
- 2 (10 3/4-ounce) cans cheddar cheese soup
- 16 ounces pasteurized cheese product (Velveeta)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Bacon, fried and crumbled for top

Sauté onion in oil until translucent. Add chicken broth, water and potatoes. Simmer for about 20 minutes or until tender. Add cream soups, cheese soup, cheese product, salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until all is melted and hot. Serve with bacon crumbled over the top.

(For a lower fat version, substitute reduced fat soups and cheese product.)

### Potato Tips

- ☀ Prevent the darkening of a just peeled potato by cooking it immediately or placing it in cold water until ready to use.
- ☀ To prevent a peeled potato from falling apart during cooking, soak in cold salt water for 10-15 minutes prior to cooking.
- ☀ When cooking potatoes to use in potato salad, add a little vinegar to the water when boiling the potatoes. The vinegar causes the potatoes to form a thin crust, which helps them hold their shape.
- ☀ When baking potatoes, place them on a metal skewer to help distribute the heat and aide in the cooking of the potatoes. You can line up new potatoes on shish kebab skewers with a little space between each one.
- ☀ Storing potatoes in the refrigerator causes the starch to change to sugar and causes discoloration when cooked. Store in a cool, dark place in a breathable bag.

## Featuring: Potato Ricers

A ricer is a tool used to process potatoes or other soft foods by forcing it through small holes, which are often not much wider than a grain of rice. It makes fluffy mashed potatoes and is essential for gnocchi (potato dumplings). You can also use it to squeeze excess water from grated potatoes for hash browns or liquid from frozen spinach or water from salted cabbage for coleslaw.



## Potato Q and A

**Q** I want to make a twice baked potato but I never seem to be able to scoop them out with a nice shell left to fill. How do I make a great twice baked potato?

**A** To start off choose a baking Russet potato as it will get a nice crusty outside and fluffy interior. Simply wash and dry the outside. Do not coat with oil. Place in a 350–400 degree oven and bake until tender inside and crusty outside. Remove from oven and cut in half. Scoop out the inside flesh leaving about a 1/2 inch shell. Combine flesh with butter, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Place shredded Cheddar cheese and a little chopped onion (if desired) in the bottom of the shells. Fill with seasoned flesh and top with more cheese. Place back in the oven until cheese is melted.

**Q** What is the best potato for making potato salad?

**A** Potato salad calls for a waxy, sturdy potato. Red potatoes have a waxy flesh that works great for boiling. Round or long whites also are good for potato salad. Russets have a drier flesh and are higher in starch which makes them better for baking than boiling.

**Q** How can I cut down on the amount of fat in my mashed potatoes?

**A** Yellow potatoes, such as Yukon Golds, have a creamy, buttery flavored flesh so you can use less butter when preparing. The flesh is really dense so they will take a little longer to cook and they are a little more expensive.