

Extension

Seasonal Eating Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Meat and Potatoes February 2015

I love a wide variety of foods – from a fancy poached salmon and Italian saffron risotto to seven layer salad and quiche. But in the winter particularly, nothing beats the good old standard of meat and potatoes. Mashed, baked, roasted, fried or boiled, potatoes are the most popular vegetable as well as the most popular side dish, coming in ahead of rice and pasta in the average American diet.

Potatoes sometimes get a bad rap because we tend to fry them in oil or load them down with butter and sour cream which are high fat items. But actually potatoes themselves have no fat or cholesterol, are an excellent source of vitamin C, and are a good source of fiber, potassium and vitamin B6.

It's important to use the right potato for your cooking task. Russet potatoes (also known as Idaho or baking potatoes) are the highest in starch so they are good for baking, frying, roasting or mashing. When boiled, they tend to fall apart instead of holding their shape. Their skin is brown and relatively sturdy which makes them ideal for twice-baked potatoes and potato skins where you want a crisp, hearty shell.

The less starchy and more waxy potatoes include white, red, yellow and blue (or purple). White potatoes have a thin, delicate skin with white flesh and are considered an all-purpose potato. They are good for boiling, baking like in scalloped or au gratin potatoes, roasting or mashing. Red potatoes have beneficial phytonutrients in the red skins and because they are thin and tender are most often left on the potato for cooking and eating. They are great for potato salads, boiling and in soups. The yellow potatoes (Yukon Gold, Golden, etc.) have a dense yellow flesh with a sweet, buttery taste that lends itself well to healthier preparations that use less butter. The purple potatoes have a bluish/purple flesh and an earthy, nutty flavor. They retain their shape making them ideal for salads.

February is potato lover's month so let's show our love for potatoes and serve a few this month. A great side dish is Parmesan Cheesy Potato Wedges. Russet potatoes are cut into wedges, dipped in a little melted butter and topped with a garlic and Parmesan cheese mixture before going into the oven. They are the perfect accompaniment to a steak, hamburger or baked chicken. I had them with a cubed steak the other night for a meat and potatoes comfort dinner!

For more ideas on using seasonal produce, visit the Bedford County Extension website (<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford>) and click on Seasonal Eating.



Parmesan Cheesy Potato Wedges

3 Russet potatoes

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

3/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 teaspoon garlic powder

3/4 teaspoon paprika

3 tablespoons butter, melted

Wash potatoes and cut each into 12 wedges. Combine cheese, salt, garlic powder and paprika. Dip potatoes in butter and arrange in a single layer in a lightly greased 15x10 inch pan. Sprinkle cheese mixture over potatoes. Bake at 375 degrees, uncovered for 40 minutes or until potatoes are browned and tender.