

# Vegetables for Health the Pyramid Way

# Potatoes



Nellie Hedstrom  
Extension nutrition specialist

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**T**he potato is a favorite food of just about everyone. It is economical, low in calories and nutritious. It can be prepared in a variety of ways. The four basic types of potatoes are round whites, long whites, russets and round reds. Maine-grown potatoes are available late July through the following May.

## Nutrition Information

Potatoes are a good resource of vitamin C and potassium. Unfortunately, they have been accused for many years of being a high-calorie food. This is unfair: one medium baked potato contains only 110 calories. But beware! If you add one tablespoon each of sour cream and butter or margarine, the calories jump to 240!

## Selection

Look for plump, firm, unbruised potatoes. Avoid those that are green or have started to shrivel or sprout.

## Storage

Store potatoes in a cool, dry, dark place that is well ventilated. A temperature of 45 degrees F is best for storage. Potatoes stored above 45 degrees F will sprout and shrivel. Those stored below 45 degrees F will develop a sweet taste, as some of the potato starch turns to sugar. (This increase in sugar will cause the potato to darken when cooked.) Do not store potatoes in the refrigerator.

## Preparation

Scrub potatoes. Peel them or not, depending on your taste. Peeled potatoes will turn dark if they are not cooked soon. Do not soak them in cold water to keep them white. This will cause the potatoes to lose vitamins.

**Boil:** Best for thin-skinned potatoes. Place one inch of water in a sauce pan with a tight-fitting lid. Cook covered. Medium potatoes will take about 30 to 40 minutes to cook.

**Bake:** Best for thick-skinned potatoes. Bake potatoes 45 minutes at 400 degrees F, or bake them along with whatever you have in the oven and adjust the time according to the temperature. It can range from 325 to 450 degrees F. At higher temperatures, the skin will be crisper. Pierce skin with a fork so steam will escape. This prevents the potato from bursting.

**Microwave:** Pierce skin with a fork. Arrange potatoes on a paper towel, one inch apart. Microwave on high power for four to six minutes per potato. Turn potatoes over after half the cooking time. Let stand five minutes. When the potatoes are cooked, take them out and wrap in foil to allow the potatoes to cook evenly throughout.

**Steam:** Best for thin-skinned, small potatoes. Cut a small strip from the potato. This will keep the skin from breaking. To steam, bring one inch of water to boil in the bottom of a pan.

Place a colander or a collapsible steaming basket in the pan. Then put the vegetables in the colander or steamer and cover it tightly. Reduce heat to medium-low, but make sure it is high enough to keep the water bubbling. Steam for 15 to 20 minutes.



### Oven French Fries

*These are much lower in fat and calories than regular fries.*

#### Serves: 6

- 4 medium potatoes
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika

Preheat oven to 475 degrees F. Wash potatoes and cut into long strips about 1/2 inch thick. Dry strips thoroughly on paper towels. Mix oil and paprika together in a bowl. Toss potato strips in mixture as if making a salad. When strips are thoroughly coated, spread strips in a single layer on a cooking sheet and place in preheated oven. Bake for 35 minutes. Turn strips every 10 minutes so they will brown on all sides. To make fries crisper and browner, place under broiler for a minute or two.

#### Nutritional content per serving:

86 calories	2 g protein
4 g fat	0.6 g fiber
13 mg vitamin C	1.1 mg iron
64 mg calcium	0 mg cholesterol
5 mg sodium	

### Potato-Pepper and Onion Bake

*A wonderful summertime recipe. Each serving provides more than two times the daily requirement for vitamin C.*

#### Serves: 4

- 1 pound potatoes (thin-skinned preferred)
- 1 to 1 1/2 pounds bell peppers (green, yellow, orange and/or red)
- 1 large sweet onion
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- black pepper to taste

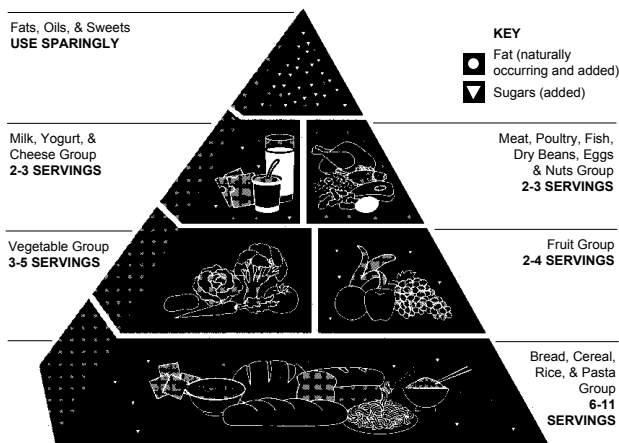
Cut cleaned potatoes into 1-inch slices or chunks. (Peel thick-skinned potatoes.) Cut cleaned peppers into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Peel onion and cut into chunks. Place potatoes, peppers and onions in shallow, oven-proof dish. Pour oil over vegetables and lightly toss to coat with oil. Sprinkle with pepper. Bake at 425 degrees F for approximately 30 minutes. (Or wrap vegetables in a double layer of aluminum foil and cook on barbeque grill over medium heat for approximately 30 minutes.)

#### Nutritional content per serving:

169 calories	3 g protein
7 g fat	1.9 g fiber
169 mg vitamin C	107 RE vitamin A
2.3 mg iron	22 mg calcium
0 mg cholesterol	9 mg sodium

### Food Guide Pyramid

A Guide to Daily Food Choices



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