

Teacher's Guide - Potatoes

Objective: To provide information about buying, preparing and storing potatoes.

Sample ANCHOR questions for participants:

"Who likes to eat potatoes?"

"Why don't you (or your family) like eating potatoes?"

"Name the different ways you have tried cooking potatoes?"

"Would you be interested in learning healthy ways to prepare potatoes?"

"How many times a week do you serve potatoes?"

"When do you serve potatoes - What meals?"

"What kinds of potatoes does your family like to eat?"

"What kinds of things influence the way you prepare potatoes for you or your family?"

If during your discussion involving your ANCHOR questions your participants did not suggest topics they would like to learn about today you may want to ask:

"What kind of information would be useful to you or your family about potatoes?"

Background Information - Choose the appropriate information below to **ADD** to your lesson.

Serving Potatoes

Potatoes can be served any time of the day - breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks.

Buying Potatoes

- Potatoes are usually cheap.
- Potatoes are available in different forms- fresh, canned, frozen and dried flakes or granules.
- Buy **fresh** potatoes that are fairly clean, firm and smooth. Avoid potatoes that are wrinkled or have wilted skins, soft dark areas, cut surfaces or have a green appearance. If a small amount of green is on the skin, cut away and discard green portion. If the potato has more than a small amount do not use it. The green portion contains solanine and is poisonous. Young children are more at risk because of their immature nervous system. Solanine has a bitter taste. Throw away potatoes that are shriveled or have many sprouts.

Amounts of Potatoes

- 1 pound of fresh potatoes equals:
- about 3 medium potatoes
 - 3 cups peeled and sliced potatoes
 - 2 cups mashed potatoes
 - 2 cups French fries

Potatoes are a healthy food choice especially when NOT French fried or topped with sour cream, butter or cheese. If you like to add sour cream or cheese to your potatoes choose low fat or fat free to reduce the amount of fat added by these foods?

Potatoes and Nutrition

- A **plain** potato has almost no sodium or fat.
- Potatoes are a good source of potassium and vitamins B and C.
- Potatoes are a good source of fiber if the skins are eaten.

Compare Fat & Calories:

1 medium (2 1/2" x 3") baked potato, plain	0 grams fat	110 calories
15 regular potato chips	10 grams fat	150 calories
15 baked potato chips	2 grams fat	120 calories
20 French fries, frozen, oven heated	8 grams fat	220 calories
Fast-food French fries, small order	13 grams fat	250 calories
Mashed potatoes with milk & butter	10 grams fat	210 calories

Storing "Fresh" Potatoes

- Store potatoes in a cool, dark and dry area (not the refrigerator).
- The best storage temperature is 45-50 degrees. At this temperature, potatoes should keep for several weeks. They don't keep as long at room temperature.
- Do not put potatoes in the refrigerator. The starch can turn into sugar which makes them taste sweet and can cause them to darken when cooked.
- Warm storage temperature encourages sprouting and shriveling.
- Do not store potatoes under the sink, as they may attract bugs and rodents.

Home Freezing Potatoes

- The best potatoes for freezing are those that have been cooked such as mashed potato patties or baked stuffed potatoes.
- Raw potatoes or potatoes in combination dishes such as soups and stews do not freeze well. After thawing and reheating, they tend to disintegrate, particularly if the potatoes are whole or cut into large pieces.
- If preparing a combination dish for freezing, omit potatoes and add them during the thawing/reheating step before serving.

Instant Potato Flakes/Granules

How to Store

- Packages of instant potatoes flakes/granules should be kept in a cool, dry place.
- After opening, keep unused Instant potatoes in a tightly covered container.
- Cover and store leftover prepared potatoes in the refrigerator.

Ways to Use Instant Potato Flakes/Granules

- Mashed potatoes are good when freshly prepared and served steaming hot.
- Use prepared mashed potatoes to make potato patties, puffs and toppings for meat pies.
- To increase flavor add onion or herbs to water when preparing potatoes.

- Stir in fat free yogurt, reduced fat sour cream or cottage cheese for a different taste.

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