

February is Potato Lovers Month



Whether mashed, baked or roasted, people often consider potatoes as comfort food. It is an important food staple and the number one vegetable crop in the world. Potatoes are available year-round as they are harvested somewhere every month of the year.

The potato belongs to the Solanaceae or nightshade family whose other members include tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and tomatillos. They are the swollen portion of the underground stem which is called a tuber and is designed to provide food for the green leafy portion of the plant. If allowed to flower and fruit, the potato plant will bear an inedible fruit resembling a tomato.

Health Benefits

Vitamin C - Potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C (45% of the DV), which is more vitamin C than one medium tomato (40% DV) or sweet potato (30% DV). Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin that acts as an antioxidant stabilizing free radicals, thus helping prevent cellular damage. It aids in collagen production; assists with iron absorption; and helps heal wounds and keep your gums healthy. Vitamin C may help support the body's immune system.

Fiber - One medium potato with the skin contributes 2 grams of fiber or 8% of the daily value per serving. Dietary fiber is a complex carbohydrate and is the part of the plant material that cannot be digested and absorbed in the bloodstream. Soluble fiber may help with weight loss as it makes you feel full longer, and research has shown it also may help lower blood cholesterol.

Vitamin B6 - Potatoes are a good source of vitamin B6 with one medium potato providing 10% of the recommended daily value. Vitamin B6 is a water-soluble vitamin that plays important roles in carbohydrate and protein metabolism. It helps the body make nonessential amino acids needed to make various body proteins; it is a cofactor for several co-enzymes involved in energy metabolism; and is required for the synthesis of hemoglobin - an essential component of red blood cells.

Iron - One medium potato provides 6% of the recommended daily value of iron.

Potassium - One medium potato with skin provides 620 milligrams or 18% of the recommended daily value (DV) of potassium per serving and is considered one of the best foods with potassium. Potatoes rank highest for foods with potassium and are among the top 20 most frequently consumed raw vegetables and fruits. Potassium is a mineral that is part of every body cell. It helps regulate fluids and mineral balance in and out of cells and in doing so, helps maintain normal blood pressure. Potassium is also vital for transmitting nerve impulses or signals, and in helping muscles contract. Potassium is a powerful dietary factor that may help lower blood

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size	1 potato (148g/5.2oz)
Amount per serving	
Calories	110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 20mg	2%
Iron 1.1mg	6%
Potassium 620mg	15%
Vitamin C 27mg	30%
Vitamin B ₆ 0.2mg	10%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

pressure. Unfortunately, few Americans are getting the recommended 4700 milligrams per day of potassium they need. (Potatoes make it easier!)

7 Categories of Potatoes

Just like some apples are best for sauce and others are great for eating raw, different potatoes work better for different purposes. More than a hundred varieties of potatoes are sold in the US, but they fall into seven major categories for cooking.

Russet Potatoes have an earthy flavor and are the perfect choice for baking and making light, fluffy mashed potatoes. They can be cut into wedges or planks for oven 'fries' and dipped into everything from light sour cream to spicy salsa. Best for: Baking, Mashing, Roasting

Red Potatoes have a thinner skin and a subtle, sweet flavor. Their waxy texture helps them stay firm throughout cooking, making them ideal for stews, soups and salads. They roast beautifully and are a colorful addition as a side dish. Best for: Boiling, Steaming, Sauté, Scallop, Soups, Salads

White Potatoes also have a thin skin, so they can be easily mashed without peeling. They hold their shape well after cooking; their creamy texture and mild flavor make them perfect for grilling, steaming and boiling. Best for: Boiling, Steaming, Mashing, Roasting, Scallop, Soups, Salads

Yellow Potatoes are great for lighter dishes, since their golden color means that less oil or butter needs to be added. Their naturally smooth and buttery texture lends itself to baking, roasting and mashing, as well as pan 'frying.' Best for: Mashing, Steaming, Baking, Boiling, Roasting

Purple/Blue Potatoes have a moist, firm flesh and nutty, earthy flavor. Their rich, vibrant color makes them a lovely addition to any salad. The best way to preserve the color is microwaving, but steaming and baking are also delicious. Best for: Boiling, Steaming, Baking

Fingerling Potatoes come in multiple colors. Their size and shape make them a visually interesting addition to almost any dish. Split fingerlings roast quickly in the oven, serve with ketchup or more exotic sauces like spicy sriracha. Best for: Boiling, Steaming, Baking

Petite Potatoes are bite-sized versions of larger potato varieties. While the skin, color and flesh can come in any of the types above, their flavor is more concentrated. Cooked and served whole, they reduce prep time, especially when roasted.

Selling opportunities for February

February is Potato Lovers Month - Enter your potato display in a national contest. You can find out all the details about the National Potato Lovers month display contest on the Internet at www.idahopotato.com. You could have a contest for the kids that shop your store. Buy a couple of prizes and give them away for the best drawing, best decorated potato, etc. Entering a contest creates excitement and if you win, you can let your customers know you won. So build your best display, capture the extra sales and hopefully win the contest.

Valentine's Day - February 14th - Promote your entire floral department and product department.

Washington's Birthday - Promote Washington apples with variety and promotions.

Lincoln's Birthday Sale - Have a \$5.00 sale and promote the 2 for \$5, 3 for \$5, 4 for \$5 and the 5 for 5's. It works!!!

Being the Architect of the Produce Department; it's your responsibility to build a positive image with your customers. Having a special promotion every week, merchandising your department by category, being the freshest produce department in your marketing area, having the variety that your customer's desire and maintaining the proper product levels from 10am till 9pm will greatly influence your sales and begin to build the image you need to build loyal customers!

Organic Produce

BEETS: Beets still remain a challenge due to curly top virus that impacts the plant leaves and bulb. Supplies will be limited for a few more weeks until growers move to lower elevation new fields that should be clean.

BROCCOLI: Supply has leveled off on broccoli but we are still seeing some higher cost from suppliers. Over the next couple weeks, cost should come down.

BUNCH CARROTS: Supply has rebounded quite well and we are seeing much better quality.

CABBAGE: Regional supply has slowed down due to the dips in temperature in Florida. Supply should remain stable, but will see some darker leaves due to the colder temps.

CAULIFLOWER: Supplies are starting to improve and the quality is good. Seeing some deals from suppliers out west we will be taking advantage of.

CELERY: Supply is getting better as we have moved up in to California regions. Pricing has started to tick up over the past couple weeks.

CUCUMBERS: Supply is starting to slow down as cooler temps in Mexico has affected growing areas. We will remain in-stock, but pricing will increase.

GREEN PEPPERS: Steady supplies are available between Florida and growers out west. We will be leaning more toward Mexican product due to cooler temps in Florida affecting growth.

KALES: Great supplies of kale currently, plenty of regional product from all over the Midwest available. We are sourcing from Georgia, Florida and other regions. Product is in great supply and pricing is very promotable.

LETTUCES: Inbound quality on leafs from the west have rebounded in quality and we are seeing much better supply. Lady Moon has had great supply in Florida with great quality!

RADISHES: Supplies are improving with better quality tops. Very little damage now to the tops and they look much cleaner than they have been.

YELLOW SQUASH & ZUCCHINI: Like cucumbers, temps have really affected supply in the Nogales growing region. We will see very limited supply on organic yellow squash.

Western Vegetables

ARTICHOKES: Mexican production continues to have strong growth and quality.

AVOCADOS: Larger size organic fruit will be limited until after the Super Bowl. Smaller size organic and all conventional are promotable until then.

BROCCOLI: The broccoli market remains to have a wide range throughout the industry. Overall quality and volume have held through. Market is expected to tighten up over the next couple weeks.

CAULIFLOWER: Market has been strong with good quality.

CELERY: Very good movement and demand out of Oxnard. Great quality as fields are supplying high amount of volume.

ICEBERG LETTUCE: The lettuce market continues to be depressed, while quality has still been an issue. Quality conflicts specific to rib discoloration and tip burn have been reoccurring.

ROMAINE/ROMAINE HEARTS/MIXED LEAF: Both domestic and Mexican Romaine hearts have good overall quality. All colors are being grown domestically and quality remains good on them as well. Red leaf numbers have tightened up slightly with quality issues specific to rib discoloration and tip burn. However, we expect good numbers and quality through January.

Value-Added

Supplies of raw product are improving in the southwest growing region resulting in fewer shortages of value-added items.

Southern Vegetables

BEANS: Market remains due to cold weather in the Florida growing area.

CABBAGE: Cold weather out of the south as affected cabbage.

COLORED PEPPERS: Look for cheaper prices due to increased volume in Mexico.

CORN: Market decreasing as new areas open up in southern part of Florida.

CUCUMBERS: Market stable.

GREENS: Kale, collard, mustard and tops all going up in price due to southern freeze and switching to western greens.

HARD SQUASH: Plenty coming out of Mexico.

ONIONS: Western onion markets are steady; quality is good.

POTATOES: Markets are firm; Russet supplies are good.

TOMATOES: Slicers, beef, Roma's and grapes all decreasing in price as Mexico begins to warm up.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH: Coming from Mexico.

Asparagus

Volume on the rise as Mexican production begins to pick, driving market cost down. Good solid volume on the horizon as we move into February; look for 28# crates to become primary pack. Organic asparagus will be a new item back on guides for next week. Market cost strong with light overall volume.

Fruits

APPLES & PEARS: Midwest Honeycrisp apples are finished for the season, but Washington and Nova Scotian Honeycrisp are arriving with excellent quality and are very promotable. Supplies on Midwest bagged apples are very strong and are an excellent item to promote in stores.

BLACKBERRIES: Deals available currently, but market will swing upward as supplies level off temporarily out of Mexico. Organic blackberry supply steady; market level.

BLUEBERRIES: Supplies steady out of Chile. Pints offer best values with promotion pricing heavy in early to mid-February. Peak season of the season during that time frame; quality has been solid. Organic supply improving and heavy volume slated for mid-February. Great promotion pricing will be available for that time frame.

CANTALOUPE & HONEYDEW: All offshore product out of Guatemala or Honduras on cantaloupes and honeydews. Product quality strong with good sugar brix levels for excellent eating flavor. New item for next week is the DelMonte Mag melons which has excellent eating quality with high color netting.

CHERRIES: Market starting to move upward with best quality choice being air flown cherries, which do carry higher cost. It's a better quality advantage than using the boat fruit that's been picked for three weeks before they arrive into US ports and is now becoming very limited. Great impulse selling item.

CITRUS: The navel crop is smaller than last year. The crop is peaking on 72 and larger; navel market is firm. Various specialty citrus varieties are available; Minneola tangelos, Cara Cara navels Sumo citrus. Blood oranges are available.

CLEMENTINES: Spanish clem finished and now strictly into the Moroccan crop. Market has moved upward with the area switch. California clementines are back into better supply after some tight weeks; good quality fruit.

GRAPES: Imported Chilean and Peru grapes into full swing; quality solid but some varieties had some minor quality issues on white seedless. Costs have leveled downward particularly on red seedless. Look for some better promotional opportunities in February.

PINEAPPLES: Both conventional and organic from Costa Rica looking very nice; pricing has stabilized.

RASPBERRIES: Supply has been affected by delayed inbounds on the east coast leaving us to move out west on orders. Supply should bounce back to loading in the east.

STRAWBERRIES: The strawberry market has been affected significantly by the cooler temperatures we have seen throughout the US. Florida berries will be virtually non-existent as frost has set in pushing back any crop. Mexican fruit has also been slowed down by the dip in temperatures and supply is limited.

Chilean Stone Fruit

Full variety of Chilean stone fruit available. Peaches nice color and sizing; nectarines little tight but nice looking fruit. Black and red plums coming in better volume; plumcots are a new item along with apricots with white nectarines added into mix. Summer in February ads will be prime for the month.

Tropical Fruit

BABY FRENCH BEANS: Market down; improved supplies.

KIWI: Gold Kiwi is finished until New Zealand starts up this summer. Italian green still steady and looking nice.

LIMES: Prices have firmed up and increased on some sizes, with better demand this week. Size 200 and larger remained limited. Overall quality is very nice.

MANGOES: Organic and conventional looking very nice. New crops from Peru and Ecuador look very nice.

MARIDOL PAPAYAS/ GOLD PAPAYAS: Stable market; excellent quality on Caribbean Red Maridol papayas and Brazil Gold.

SUGAR SNAP PEAS/SNO PEAS: Great pricing; predominate Guatemala product.

Merchandising Tips

It may be winter outside, but you can create the feel of summer in your produce department with a nice display of Chilean fruit. Yes, fresh apricots, plums, peaches, nectarines, and grapes will be getting into full swing from Chile, as well as other countries in South America. Start by building a "Summer in Winter" display for your customers to enjoy. The smell of fresh ripe peaches, plums and nectarines coming from the display will help to sell the product itself. Be sure to make the display easy to maintain, as well as to keep fresh with ripe fruit. Remember to only refrigerate the fruit after it has ripened fully. Refrigerating the fruit before this will only make it seem flavorless and woody to your customers. To help

minimize on bruised fruit, teach your employees and customers the rule of thumb. If, you do not know what that is then read the following.

"The Rule of Thumb"

First make a fist with either hand, and then rest your thumb on top of the fist. Now, use your index finger from the other hand to push on the end of your thumb. Remember how that feels and grab any piece of stone fruit. The next thing to do is to find the stem end of the fruit, and using the same index finger gently push on the fruit near the stem. If the fruit feels like the end of your thumb, it is ripe and ready to eat. If it still feels hard then it is not ripe yet.

Teaching this to your employees, as well as your customers will help to cut down on your shrink and make for some happy customers. Your customers will be happy because their fruit will not be bruised on the sides and they will think that you sell excellent produce. Remember this will work on any stone fruit including mangoes, papayas, and yes even pears as you should check the neck for ripeness. Now go out and create great sales by having a fresh aromatic department.

CROSSET NEW ITEM & DELETION SHEET

W/B: 2/4/18

ITEM #	NEW ITEMS	SIZE
20875	Carrot Sticks	12/12oz
78006	OG Driscoll Strawberries	8/1#
64065	OG Atalufo Mango	14ct
69020	Black Seedless Grapes	18#
96920	Clamshell Kumquats	12/8oz
62055	Yellow Dragon Fruit	8#
18700	Dulcefina Peppers	12/12oz
72023	White Nectarines -Chilean	16#
16530	OG Asparagus	11#
DELETIONS		
78007	OG Florida Strawberries	8/1#
35149	Honeycrisp 80ct.	40#
34505	Pinata 72-80ct.	40#
96755	Gold Kiwi	58ct
38020	Pear D'Anjou 100ct	40#