



Potatoes



By far the most popular vegetable grown in the U.S., over 300 million pounds of red, yellow and white potatoes are grown right here in Skagit County. A drive through the Skagit Valley in late spring will showcase fields of flowering potato plants with white, pink, red, blue, or purple flowers. In general, the potato with white flowers have white skins, while those of varieties with colored flowers tend to have pinkish skin.

Nutrition

Cooked potatoes with skin are a good source of many vitamins and minerals, such as, vitamin B6, vitamin C, and potassium. Even though potatoes are not a high-fiber food, fiber content is highest in the skin, in fact, eating a potato with the skin provides 16% of daily fiber recommendation.

Selection

There are many different varieties of potatoes, but all varieties should have firm flesh free of blemishes. Potatoes with green flesh or sprouts can be a potential for toxicity, so it is recommended to remove green spots, eyes and sprouts from potatoes before cooking. Starchy Russet types are often preferred for baking and mashing because they are low in moisture especially those grown in Eastern Washington. Yellow potatoes are considered all-purpose. Red and white potatoes (often referred to as a waxy potato) are lower in starch which makes them good for dishes such as potato salad and scalloped potatoes because they hold their shape when cooked.

Storage

If handled properly, potatoes can be stored for many months. For best long-term storage do not wash purchased or home-grown potatoes. Store in a cool (45-50 degrees is ideal), dark location in a basket, paper bag, or cardboard box. Plastic containers and/or refrigeration are not suggested. In good conditions, potatoes may be stored for 4-6 months.

Measurements



Size



Weight



Volume

Freezing

- Wash, pare, remove deep eyes, bruises, and green surface coloring.
- Cut into 1/4" to 1/2" cubes.
- Blanch 5 minutes, cool in ice water for an equivalent amount of time.
- Drain and pack into moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags. Label, seal and freeze.



Note: Potatoes can be preserved by freezing, drying or canning. The waxy, low starch, thin-skinned potato such as red or white potatoes, rather than russet, are best for preserving.

Drying

Preparation: Peel, wash, and slice 1/4" to 3/8" thick or shoestring 3/16" thick, or grate.

Pretreatment: Rinse in cold water. Water or steam blanch. 5-6 minutes in boiling water, 6-8 minutes in steam. Drain well.

Drying Procedure:

- Arrange in single layers on drying trays.
- Dry at 140°F for 8-12 hours. Potatoes should be crisp and brittle.
- Cool thoroughly. Package potatoes in moisture/vapor proof containers. Label. Store in a cool, dark, dry place.



Canning



Potatoes are a low-acid food; therefore, pressure canning is necessary to maintain food safety.



Preserve Skagit Crop Sheets describe three food preservation techniques—freezing, drying, and water bath canning—consistent with USDA Food Preservation and Food Safety recommendations. Pressure canning for low acid foods such as meats and vegetables is not included. Additional resources and recipes, as well as information on Pressure Canning, can be found on the WSU Skagit Food Preservation Website <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/fam/food-preservation/> or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html>.

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