



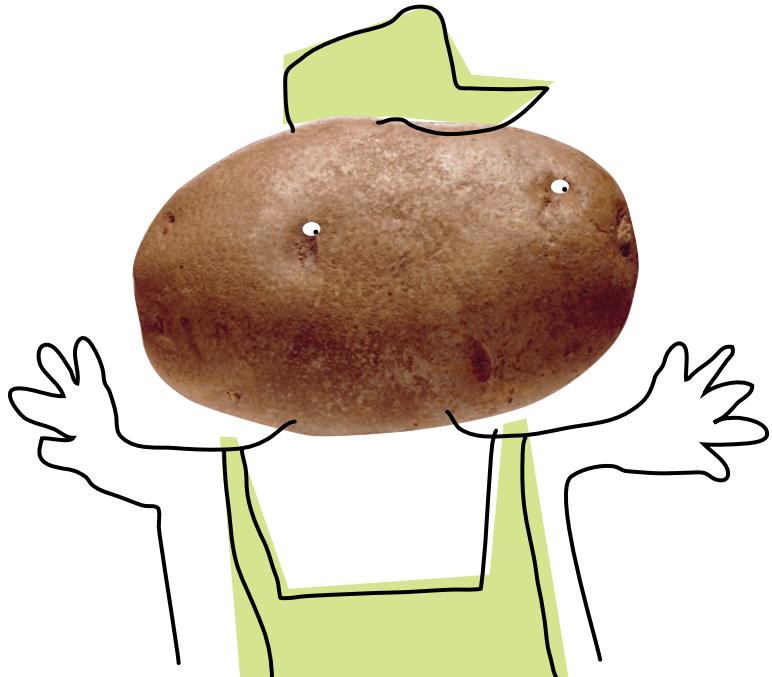
# THE PERFECT POTATO

— A Foodservice Guide to —  
Fresh Potato Types

Potatoes™  
USA

## POTATOES. THE PERFECT CANVAS FOR MENU INNOVATION.

Potatoes aren't just popular: they're the #1 side dish in foodservice. You know that baked, mashed, roasted or fried, they have the remarkable ability to sell whatever you serve with them, enhancing presentations and adding value and appetite appeal. Now that you can tap into the intriguing shapes, colors and flavors of today's exciting new potato types, innovation is easier than ever. No wonder so many chefs, from casual to fine dining, are reinventing potatoes in fresh new ways. So go ahead, grab a handful of potatoes and start thinking big.



## A SPUD FOR ALL SEASONS AND REASONS.

There are more than 4,000 potato varieties worldwide—though only a small fraction is commercialized. In the U.S., about 100 varieties are sold throughout the year to consistently meet the needs of the market. All of these varieties fit into one of five potato type categories: russet, red, white, yellow and specialty (including blue/purple, fingerling and petite).

### GET CREATIVE!

We've created these at-a-glance potato type charts to help you find the right potato for any culinary purpose. Use them as a source of inspiration. Even when a potato type is recommended for a given application, another type may also work well to create a similar effect—or even a completely different, yet equally appealing result. Experiment with the types you have access to in new ways you haven't tried. That's the key to true menu innovation. With potatoes, you really can't go wrong.

When planning your menu or testing new potato dishes it's helpful to know what questions to ask your produce distributor, such as:

- What potatoes are currently in season?
- In what sizes can I get these potatoes?
- Can I get a mixed-type case?



## RUSSETS

Most commonly used varieties include Russet Burbank, Ranger Russet, Umatilla Russet, Classic Russet and Premier Russet, which have low sugars and are suitable for both the fresh market and processing. Goldrush, Russet Norkotah, Canela Russet and Rio Grande Russet are fresh market varieties.

### DESCRIPTORS

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medium to large, but also available as “baby bakers”</li><li>• Oblong or slightly flattened oval</li><li>• Light to medium russet-brown, netted skin</li><li>• White to pale-yellow flesh</li></ul>
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Floury, dry</li><li>• Light and fluffy</li><li>• Hearty skin that is chewy when cooked</li></ul>
Flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mild</li><li>• Earthy</li><li>• Low-to-medium sugar content</li></ul>
Preferred uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Baking</li><li>• Frying</li><li>• Mashing</li><li>• Roasting</li></ul>



### Tips

- Russets are ideal for light and fluffy mashed potatoes. They also fry up crisp and golden brown, and they are the potato of choice for baking.
- The delicate flavor and fluffy texture of baked russets go well with all kinds of toppings, from traditional sour cream and chives to spicy and bold Mediterranean or Latin flavors.
- If you are using the process-type varieties to make chips or fries, store in the range of 45–55°F.
- Cut into planks or wedges to make hearty oven-roasted “fries.”
- Bake on a bed of coarse salt to absorb moisture and prevent bottoms from burning.

## REDS

Most commonly used varieties include Norland, Red La Soda, Chieftain, Sangre, Red Pontiac and Dakota Rose.

### DESCRIPTORS

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small to medium</li><li>• Round or slightly oblong</li><li>• Smooth, thin red skin (stays red when cooked)</li><li>• White flesh</li></ul>
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waxy</li><li>• Moist and smooth</li><li>• Creamy</li></ul>
Flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subtly sweet</li><li>• Mild</li><li>• Medium sugar content</li></ul>
Preferred uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roasting</li><li>• Mashing</li><li>• Salads</li><li>• Soups and stews</li></ul>



### Tips

- Because of their waxy texture, the flesh of red potatoes stays firm throughout the cooking process, whether they are being roasted or cooked in a stew.
- Their thin yet vibrant red skin adds appealing color and texture to side dishes and salads.
- Reds are frequently used to make tender yet firm potato salad or add pizzazz to soups and stews, as well as being served baked or mashed.
- Round reds are often referred to as “new potatoes,” but the term “new” technically refers to any type of potato that is harvested before reaching maturity.
- Try packing small red potatoes in a mixture of kosher salt and lightly whipped egg whites, and then baking. Discard the salt crust. You’ll have tender, moist potatoes with great textural integrity. They can be sautéed or “smashed” and browned to order.

## WHITES

Most commonly used varieties include Atlantic, Snowden, Dakota Pearl, Superior, Kennebec, Shepody, Cal White and Pike.

### DESCRIPTORS

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small to medium</li><li>• Round to long shape</li><li>• White or tan skin</li><li>• White flesh</li></ul>
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medium starch</li><li>• Slightly creamy</li><li>• Slightly dense</li><li>• Thin, delicate skin</li></ul>
Flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subtly sweet</li><li>• Mild</li><li>• Low sugar content</li></ul>
Preferred uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frying</li><li>• Mashing</li><li>• Salads</li><li>• Steaming/boiling</li></ul>



### Tips

- White potatoes hold their shape well after cooking.
- Their delicate, thin skins add just the right amount of texture to a velvety mashed potato dish without the need for peeling.
- Grilling whites brings out a more full-bodied flavor.
- Create signature potato salads—just toss cooked white potatoes with dressings and ingredients “borrowed” from other salads, e.g., Caesar dressing and grated Parmesan, or ranch dressing, chopped egg and bacon crumbles.

## YELLOW

Most commonly used varieties include Yukon Gold, Innovator, Yukon Gem, Keuka Gold and Satina.

### DESCRIPTORS

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marble to large size</li><li>• Round or oblong shape</li><li>• Light tan to golden skin</li><li>• Yellow to golden flesh</li></ul>
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slightly waxy</li><li>• Creamy</li><li>• Moist</li></ul>
Flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subtly sweet</li><li>• Rich</li><li>• Buttery</li><li>• Medium sugar content</li></ul>
Preferred uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grilling</li><li>• Roasting</li><li>• Mashing</li><li>• Salads</li></ul>



### Tips

- Grilling gives yellow potatoes a crispy skin that enhances the dense, buttery flesh, creating a slightly sweet caramelized flavor.
- The creamy texture and golden color of yellow potatoes mean you can use less or no butter for lighter, healthier dishes.
- The naturally smooth and buttery texture also lends itself well to lighter versions of baked, roasted or mashed potatoes.
- Simmer yellow potatoes until fully cooked, then drain, chill and gently “smash” into flat disks. Brown these in oil or clarified butter and serve as a side or appetizer topped with sour cream and chives or other garnishes.

## SPECIALTY POTATO TYPES

Specialty potato types (blue/purple, fingerling and petites) add even more options and possibilities to the menu. They're smaller than traditional potatoes and have thin, delicate skins, which means no peeling and faster cooking. Their vibrant colors—inside and out—along with unique shapes help you add a little unexpected “wow” to salads and sides.





## BLUE/PURPLE

Most commonly used varieties include Purple Majesty, All Blue, Mountain Rose, Purple Peruvian and Adirondack Blue.

### DESCRIPTORS

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small to medium size</li><li>• Oblong to fingerling</li><li>• Deep purple, blue or slightly red skin</li><li>• Blue, purple, lavender, pink or white flesh</li></ul>
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moist</li><li>• Firm flesh</li><li>• Exceptions: All Blue and Purple Peruvian varieties have a higher starch content and a floury texture</li></ul>
Flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Earthy</li><li>• Nutty</li><li>• Low sugar content</li></ul>
Preferred uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roasting</li><li>• Grilling</li><li>• Salads</li><li>• Baking</li></ul>



### Tips

- Most blue/purple potatoes have moist, firm flesh that retains its shape while adding rich, vibrant color and luscious taste to salads.
- The vibrant purple color is preserved best by microwaving, but steaming and baking are also great ways to cook blue/purple potatoes.
- Because of their mild yet distinctly nutty flavor, blue/purple potatoes naturally complement green salad flavors.
- Red, White and Blues: combine blue potatoes with whites and reds in salads or roasted medleys to make all three colors “pop,” or sauté in clarified butter and serve as a side or appetizer topped with sour cream and chives or other garnishes.

## FINGERLINGS

Most commonly used varieties include LaRatte, Banana, French Fingerling, Rose Finn Apple and Purple Peruvian.

### DESCRIPTORS

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 inches long</li><li>• Finger-shaped or oblong</li><li>• Red, orange, purple, yellow or white skin</li><li>• Red, orange, purple, yellow or white flesh</li></ul>
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waxy</li><li>• Firm</li><li>• Dry</li></ul>
Flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buttery</li><li>• Nutty</li><li>• Earthy</li><li>• Low-to-medium sugar content</li></ul>
Preferred uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pan-frying</li><li>• Roasting</li><li>• Salads</li></ul>



### Tips

- Fingerling color and shape are a welcome visual addition to any dish.
- Pan-frying and roasting enhance their robust flavor and showcase their wonderful nutty or buttery tastes.
- Consider fingerlings as a change-of-pace foundation for a unique potato salad.
- Split fingerlings lengthwise and oven-roast to serve as a small-plate or side dish alternative to fries, with a flavorful dipping sauce like spicy ketchup, romesco or sriracha mayo.

## PETITES

### DESCRIPTORS

#### Appearance and texture

- These bite-sized potatoes are actually a grade standard based upon size (C-size and smaller, also referred to as creamers, pearls or marble-size). Order them according to type or variety and size.
- They are the same skin and flesh color as their larger-sized cousins, as well as the same shape, texture and sugar content.

#### Flavor

- Similar but more concentrated flavor than larger-cousin potatoes

#### Preferred uses

- Salads
- Roasting
- Frying



### Tips

- Petites make a great substitute for pasta, adding nutritional value as well.
- Roast a combination of colors for an eye-catching side dish.
- Their concentrated flavors and quicker cooking time makes petites a good choice for potato salads.
- Simply toss petites in olive oil, rosemary, and salt and pepper to make colorful, delicious and fun roasted potatoes. They save you prep time because they can be prepared and served whole, without slicing or chopping.

# THE TRUTH ABOUT STARCH AND CARBS

People often refer to potatoes as a “starch.” But the starch and carbohydrate content of potatoes vary from type to type, making certain types better suited for some culinary purposes than others.

**Carbohydrates** are sugars, starches and fiber, which provide the main energy for humans and animals, and the cellulose that makes up plant structure. All fruits and vegetables contain carbohydrates.

A potato is about 20% carbohydrate, 75% water and 5% protein, vitamins and minerals. As the carbohydrate level increases, the water content decreases and vice versa.

In the kitchen, the starch content of a potato is the most significant differentiator of potato types and varieties. There is a range of starch content or “dry matter,” depending upon the variety, that affects culinary outcomes.

- A potato with higher starch content (up to 22% of a potato) is described as a “floury” potato. These potatoes cook up more granular in appearance with a mealy texture, so they’re better for dishes where potatoes should be fluffy, like baked or mashed potatoes. They’re ideal as an ingredient in applications where that kind of texture is useful—think gnocchi or dough enriched with potato, and purées or soups that use potatoes to add body and richness. However, floury potatoes don’t tend to hold their shape when cooked in liquid for long periods, such as in soups or stews.
- A potato with lower starch content (as low as 13%) is described as a “waxy” or “boiling” potato. When cooked, the flesh becomes translucent with a smooth texture. These are better for dishes when a creamy or smooth texture is desired, or for applications that require a potato to stay firm, like potato salads, soups and stews or even roasted applications.

**Potato sugars** are another important variable among potatoes. Remember photosynthesis? When plants convert sunlight into energy, they are producing simple sugars: fructose and glucose. Those sugars are then converted to sucrose for storage until the energy is used to grow and respire (breathe) and produce starch, the storage component for many nutrients. Potatoes are naturally low in sugar, evidenced by their earthy taste, but sugar levels can range from variety to variety. That subtle sweetness is a desired characteristic for some dishes. In preparations like frying, when excess sugars can cause the potato to turn dark or blacken, there are ways to ensure the desired outcome:

- Request potatoes with low sugar levels
- Follow proper handling instructions, especially storage temperatures. When potatoes are stored at less than 45°F, their starch begins to convert to sugar.

## STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Look for well-formed, smooth and firm potatoes with no discoloration, cracks or soft spots.
- Store in a cool (45–55°F), dry environment with good ventilation.
- Avoid exposure to light to keep greening to a minimum. Green potatoes are bitter.
- Avoid refrigerating or storing in plastic bags.
- Avoid storing at temperatures below 45°F.

## HEALTHFUL, GLOBAL, INNOVATIVE.

As the demand for lighter, healthier menu options and bold global flavors continues to grow, more and more chefs are turning to America's favorite vegetable as the perfect canvas for menu innovation. Why? Because potatoes are a familiar, comforting foundation that can stand up to today's big flavors and eye-catching presentations. And they're a nutrition powerhouse that can be a perfect fit for health-conscious menus.

Potatoes have a remarkable nutrition story to tell. One medium skin-on potato offers:

- 45% of the daily value for vitamin C
- More potassium than a banana
- 10% of the daily value of B6
- Only 110 calories
- No fat, sodium, cholesterol or gluten



Looking for new ways to use potatoes?  
Visit [PotatoGoodness.com](http://PotatoGoodness.com) for trend-forward  
ideas and recipes to help you tap into the profit  
power of potatoes.



4949 S. Syracuse Street #400

Denver, Colorado 80237

**PotatoesUSA.com**