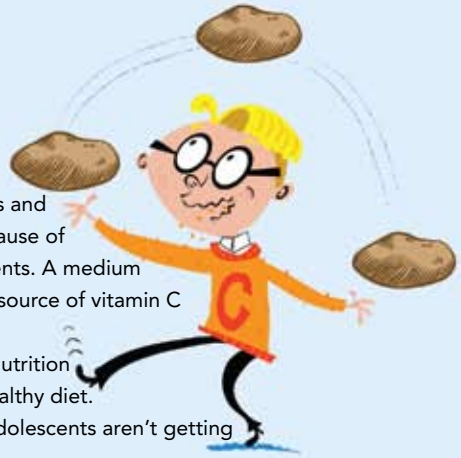
Partners In NUTRITION

Potatoes—Packed with Good Nutrition!



Potatoes have been a big part of school menus for decades because they're a familiar and favorite food, yet oh so nutritious and delicious. Potatoes are regularly featured in school lunches because of their nutritional value, low cost, and overwhelming popularity with students. A medium (5.3 oz) skin-on potato has 110 calories, 2 grams of fiber, is an excellent source of vitamin C and is a good source of vitamin B6 and potassium.

Scientists and government agencies involved in setting the nation's nutrition policy recommend including fruits and vegetables, like potatoes, in a healthy diet. The federal government's *2005 Dietary Guidelines* found children and adolescents aren't getting enough potassium, making it a "nutrient of concern." The fact is, potatoes have the highest potassium content among the top 20 most frequently consumed raw vegetables and the top 20 most frequently consumed raw fruits, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Tater Trivia: Join the world in celebrating 2008 as the International Year of the Potato as declared by the United Nations! Visit http://www.potato2008.org for more information.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sets nutrient standards for school lunches and requires that lunches comply with the U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommendations. That means lunches must provide, on average throughout the week, at least one-third of the daily recommended allowances for protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C. USDA's ***MyPyramid*** food guidance system recommends that school-aged kids get 1 ½ to 3 cups of vegetables per day. The great news is that one medium (5.3 oz) potato counts as 1 cup of veggies! To help kids eat more fruits and vegetables, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Produce for Better Health Foundations' campaign, "Fruits and Veggies: More Matters," try these creative and tasty ideas at home:

- **Pair a perennial favorite with a new vegetable, such as potatoes roasted with butternut squash, carrots, or sweet yellow beets.**
- **Make veggies easy to eat—dish up mashed potatoes beside peas or steamed greens, or add fun flavorings like Parmesan cheese.**
- **Reinvent the meal—top a baked potato with cauliflower, broccoli and lowfat cheese.**

Pippa Potato

Potatoes are so beloved by kids that the School Nutrition Association designed one of its "Vote for School Lunch" characters after the special spud! Her name is Pippa Potato and she enjoys debating hot-potato topics—like the causes of childhood obesity—so she can spread the word about the healthfulness of school lunches. **To learn more about how schools are participating in the "Vote for School Lunch" campaign, visit *www.VoteForSchoolLunch.org*.**

How to Read a Nutrition Facts Label

Nutrition labels give you the knowledge to choose the best foods for health and energy. Check out how potatoes stack up nutritionally, below.

Twice-Baked Potato Cook-Off

Potatoes are naturally fat-free and sodium-free, high in vitamin C, and a good source of potassium. Make the most of this healthful treat by trying this tasty, nutritious option.

1. Wash potatoes. Pierce the potatoes with a fork.
2. Preheat oven to 450°.
3. Microwave the potatoes on high for seven minutes.
4. Remove the potatoes. When they've cooled down, slice them in half lengthwise down the center.
5. Scoop out the center of the potatoes. Mix the portion you've scooped out with the steamed broccoli, sour cream, and 3/4 of the cheese. Mash the mixture until creamy.
6. Scoop 1/8 of the mixture back into each potato skin. Top with remaining cheese. Place potatoes on a baking sheet and bake for eight minutes. Enjoy!

Makes 4 servings.
Per serving: 171 calories, 13 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 2 g total fat, 236 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.

You need:

- 4 medium russet potatoes
- 1 cup steamed broccoli
- 1/2 cup fat-free sour cream
- 1 cup grated, reduced-fat cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese

Kids can help!

Attention Parents: Grant Money Available for Your School! The U.S. Potato Board (USPB) is teaming up with SNA's School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) to launch its first-ever School Wellness Grant Program. Ten grants of $2,500 each will be awarded to public elementary schools in the United States.

The program has been developed to help schools find healthful, tasty vegetable options that students will enjoy eating, and to provide opportunities for more school-based physical activity. Grant award recipients can spend awarded funds toward:

- Purchasing school foodservice equipment for preparing potatoes in healthy ways.
- Purchasing physical activity equipment for school playgrounds or for physical education programs.

A unique feature of this grant program is that it allows schools to allocate funds toward the improvement of either the nutrition or physical activity of students—or both—depending on what their students need the most.

Tater Trivia: In October 1995, the potato became the first vegetable grown in space. NASA and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, created technology to feed the healthy vegetable to astronauts on long space voyages, and eventually, to feed future space colonies.

Applying is as Easy as One Potato, Two Potato!

Applications are available online at *http://www.healthypotato.com* or *http://www.schoolnutrition.org* and must be completed by **April 15, 2008**. Winners will be announced at the 2008 School Nutrition Association Annual National Conference.

Resources

For more information about eating good foods, visit:
www.healthypotato.com • www.schoolnutrition.org
www.mypyramid.gov • www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

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UNITED STATES Potato BOARD

Baked Fries with Salsa

1. Heat oven to 450°.
2. Slice potatoes lengthwise 3/4-inch thick, then cut each slice into 3/4-inch long sticks.
3. Place in large bowl. Drizzle with oil and sprinkle with herb seasoning and salt; toss to coat evenly.
4. Arrange potato pieces in a single layer on nonstick baking sheet or baking sheet coated with vegetable cooking spray.
5. Bake 20 to 25 minutes until potatoes are golden brown, turning once after 15 minutes.
6. Serve immediately, with optional salsa for dipping.

Makes 4 servings.
Per serving: 110 calories, 2 g protein, 19 g carbohydrate, 4 g total fat, 149 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.

Tater Trivia: Potatoes rank highest for potassium content among the top 20 most frequently consumed raw vegetables and the top 20 most frequently consumed raw fruits, according to the FDA.

You need:

- 3 medium potatoes, uniform in size (5 to 6 ounces each)
- 1 tablespoon canola or other vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian herb seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Salsa, optional