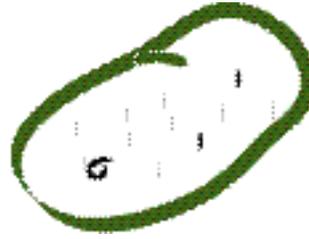


The Hot Potato



The final exam in nutrition consisted of a single question, “If you were stranded on a deserted island, with only one food, what should that food be and why?” The answer was the potato. Its vitamin C would prevent scurvy, the first deficiency disease likely to set in. It has plenty of carbohydrates for energy, protein for muscles, and is a great source of potassium and iron. Those Survivor folks had it all wrong; they should have searched for potatoes, not rats!

Potatoes are the most popular vegetable in America. But like apples, most people have tried only one type. What a shame, especially since there are over 50 varieties that grow in the US.

Potatoes come in two basic types. There are “floury” varieties, which have more starch and less water. They make great mashed potatoes; Russets are the most famous floury type. The other basic type is waxy. Waxy potatoes hold their shape while being cooked, so they make great potato salad and roasted potatoes. Pontiac reds, and yellow Finns are two waxy types you may find in your local grocery store. The yellow potatoes are rich and buttery tasting. Pontiac Red potatoes make a beautiful potato salad. Purple potatoes are fun!

Keep your little spuds in a cool dry place, away from too much humidity. If you bought them in a plastic bag, transfer them into a paper one to keep them dry. Store potatoes out of direct light. Light causes the formation of solanine (that greenish stuff). If a potato is a bit green cut that out. If it is more than

half green toss it.

Want to celebrate National Nutrition Month in March—consider a potato of the month club!

The most popular potato dish is the French Fry. Since I hope you have given up deep-frying, try making oven fries by coating sliced potatoes with a light spray of oil, and garlic salt. Then bake at 350 for about 20 minutes. Pass the catsup! Here are some other potato recipes for you to try:

Irish Mashed Potatoes

This is a great way to use leftover mashed potatoes

- 2 cups green cabbage, shredded
- 2 cups mashed potatoes, made with skim milk
- 1/4 cup green onions, sliced
- 1/4 tsp dried parsley
- Black pepper

Cook cabbage in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain. Reheat the potatoes if you are using leftovers, then fold in the cabbage, and onions.

Sprinkle with parsley and add black pepper to taste.

Serves 4. Each 2/3 cup serving: 77 calories, .5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 1 mg cholesterol, 35 mg sodium, 15 g carbohydrate, 2.5 g fiber, 3.5 g protein.

Potato-Crust Pizza

Shredded potatoes replace the crust for this pizza. People allergic to wheat will love this pizza!

- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 2 beaten egg whites

- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
 - 2 Tbsp. olive oil
 - 2 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
 - 2 medium yellow summer squash, thinly sliced
 - 1 medium sweet pepper, chopped
 - 1 small red onion, halved and thinly sliced
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 4 tomatoes, sliced
 - 1/2 Tbsp. basil
 - 1 cup lowfat shredded mozzarella cheese
- Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Grate potatoes and onion into large bowl. Squeeze out and drain excess moisture. Mix in egg whites, cornstarch, and salt. Press into a cookie sheet sprayed with pan spray. Bake for 15 minutes. Brush with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil; bake 10 minutes more. Place under the broiler; broil 4 to 5 inches from the heat for 2 to 3 minutes or till golden and crisp.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl combine the zucchini, yellow squash, sweet pepper, red onion, and garlic. In a large skillet heat the remaining tablespoon of oil and stir-fry the vegetable mixture, 2 cups at a time, till vegetables are crisp-tender. Spread the cooked vegetables over the baked potato crust. Sprinkle with basil and mozzarella. Bake in a 425 [degrees] oven for 5 to 7 minutes or till cheese is melted. Cut in 8 squares.

Serves 8. Each serving: 142 calories, 4.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 1 mg cholesterol, 133 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 7 g protein.

By Carol M. Coughlin, RD.