

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

FAX: 932-5261

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BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.  
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776  
e-mail:mkeith@ufl.edu

## Taters, Spuds or Potatoes

No matter what you call them, white potatoes are one of the top four foods in the world. Only more wheat, corn and rice are eaten than potatoes. Here in the US we manage to eat about 125 pounds of potatoes each per year on average. With all the new ways of preparing potatoes and of using purified potato starch we may soon be eating even more than that.

You might guess that potatoes are popular around the world just by looking at all the different ways of preparing them. Latkes are grated potatoes mixed with onions and matzo meal, fried in oil. They're a specialty at Hanukah. Pierogies are Polish noodle dumplings often filled with potatoes and sauerkraut. (If you really like pierogies, celebrate National Pierogi Day on October 8!) Gnocchi are Italian dumplings made with mashed potato mixed with cheese. The Irish depended on potatoes for generations and we still eat O'Brien potatoes. Rösti are crisp potato pancakes from Switzerland. Curried potatoes come from India, France at least gets the name credit for French fries, and Scandinavian fish chowders would not be the same without potatoes. And if you haven't tasted a chocolate mashed potato cake, you're missing out on something delicious. Take a guess at the size of the largest known potato pie, made in Peru. (Answer at the end!)

Speeding up the recipe development process, we now have potato pizzas! A loaded baked pizza comes with ranch dressing, mozzarella and cheddar cheeses, with bacon bits and chives. And if you really want to mix the international flavors, at least

one pizza chain is offering potato and chicken pizzas with mango chutney, cilantro and raisin toppings. Potato tacos, Asian potato dumplings and meatloaf cupcakes with mashed potato frosting are all on market somewhere across the country.

Another way that our potato consumption is changing can be seen in the produce section. No longer are there just baking potatoes and red boiling potatoes on the tables. Now you can choose long slender fingerling potatoes. Some places you can find potatoes that look as though someone twisted them end to end. If you want to add some color to your plates, without a lot of flavor change, pick up a bag of yellow potatoes that taste like they're all ready buttered. Others are spotted with yellow or orange. Or be dramatic and pick purple potatoes. They're purple the whole way through, not just in the skin!

Besides your dinner plate or snack bag, potatoes are showing up in cakes, candy and even yogurt. Purified potato starch has very little flavor or color, so it can be used to thicken many foods. Depending on how it is extracted and ground, it can make foods soft or crunchy, buttery or crisp. Some types of potato starch are actually dietary fibers that we can't digest. Some are being used to develop probiotic foods to help the good bacteria in our guts, or to reduce calories for dietetic foods. And since potatoes don't have the same protein as wheat, potato starch is used in many gluten-free products.

Whether a potato is good or bad for your diet or your weight is up to you. A plain medium potato has only about 100 calories, no cholesterol and no sodium, but more potassium than a banana as well as other vitamins and minerals. It's the butter, oil or sour cream we add, the salt and sugar we sprinkle on or dip a potato into that make the difference to our diets.

Here's yet another way to serve potatoes. It'll add more color and flavor to your picnic table than your neighbor's plain potato salad. Just be sure to keep it refrigerated until it's served.

#### Hungarian Potato Salad

2 large potatoes	1 carrot
2 cups cauliflower florets (fresh or frozen)	½ cup green peas (frozen)
¼ cup low calorie mayonnaise	2 tsp lemon juice
1 hard-cooked egg	2 black olives

Salt and pepper to taste

Peel potatoes and carrots. Cut in small chunks. Bring a saucepan of water to a boil and add potatoes. Boil 5 minutes then add carrots. Boil until tender, about 15 minutes longer. Drain. If cauliflower is fresh, microwave until just tender. If frozen, prepare it and peas according to package directions. Combine cooked potatoes, carrots, peas and cauliflower in large bowl. Peel and dice the egg. Chop the olives. In small bowl combine mayo, lemon juice salt and pepper. Stir in egg and olives. Add to potato mixture and mix gently. Cover and chill until served. Serves 4.

Answer to potato pie question: 11,858 pounds, or just a hair shy of 6 tons!