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All The Potato Varieties You Need To Know About

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Potatoes are the all-star of the vegetable world in our opinion. Mashed, fried, or just as skins, potatoes rock our world in so many ways. And preparing a great potato dish doesn't have to be difficult -- it can be as simple as throwing them in the oven with some butter and salt. The hardest part, in fact, is often making sure you buy the right *type* of potato.

Potatoes fall into two important categories that impact the outcome of your dish: starchy and waxy (plus a category that lies somewhere in between those two).

Starchy: Like the classic Idaho or Russet, these potatoes are (obviously) high in starch and low in moisture. They're fluffy, making them great for boiling, baking and frying, but they don't hold their shape well, so they should be avoided in dishes like casseroles, gratins and potato salads.

Waxy: Like Red Bliss or New Potatoes, these have a low starch content and are often characterized by a creamy, firm and moist flesh that holds its shape well after cooking. They're typically great for roasting, boiling, casseroles and potato salads.

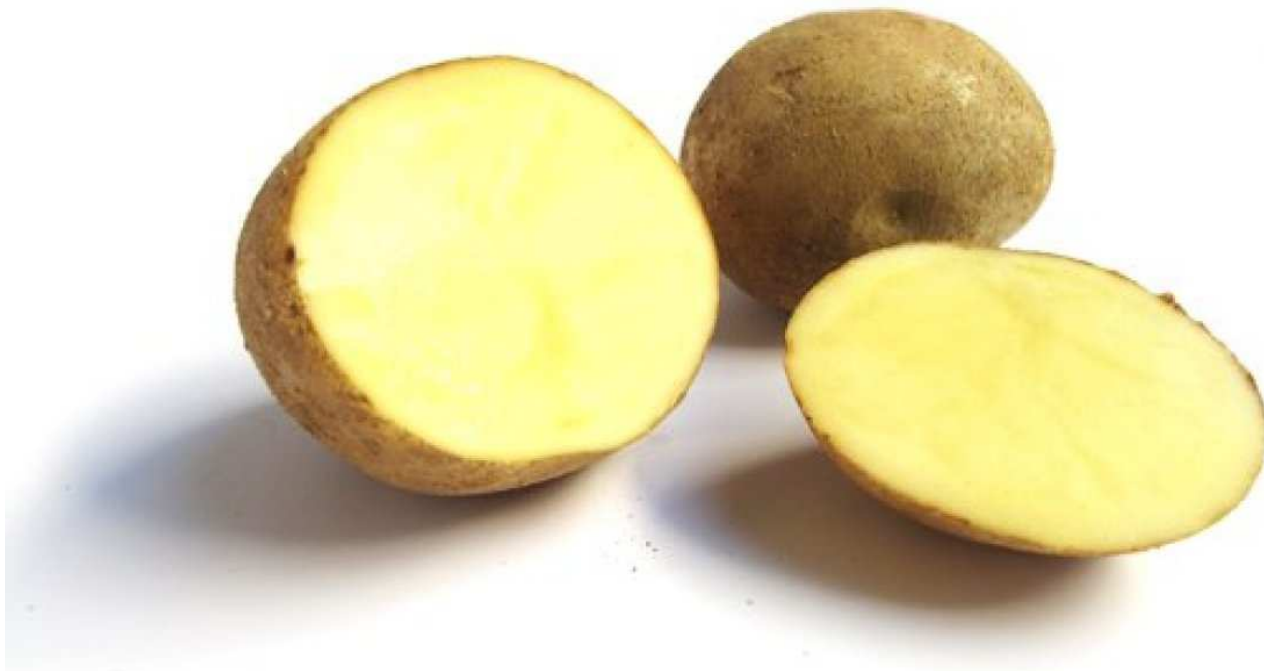
All-Purpose: These potatoes have a medium starch content that fall somewhere in between the starchy and waxy potatoes. They're a true multi-purpose potato, and therefore can be used for just about any cooking application. A classic example is the Yukon Gold.

Once you know which type of potato you need for your particular dish, you can be as creative as you'd like when choosing varieties at the market. For example, if you're thinking of making a potato gratin, you know you're looking for a firm, waxy potato -- you can choose from a bright blue Purple Peruvian, a yellow Inca Gold, or any other waxy variety.

Here are 13 of our favorite potatoes, and everything you need to know about them.

- 1

Yukon Gold -- All Purpose



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Yukon Gold potatoes have finely flaked yellowish-white skin with light yellow flesh. They're bright, vegetal and slightly sweet, with a smooth, slightly waxy texture and moist flesh. They're best for boiling, baking and making French fries. They'll also stand up well to grilling, pan frying and roasting.

- 2

Purple Peruvian -- All Purpose

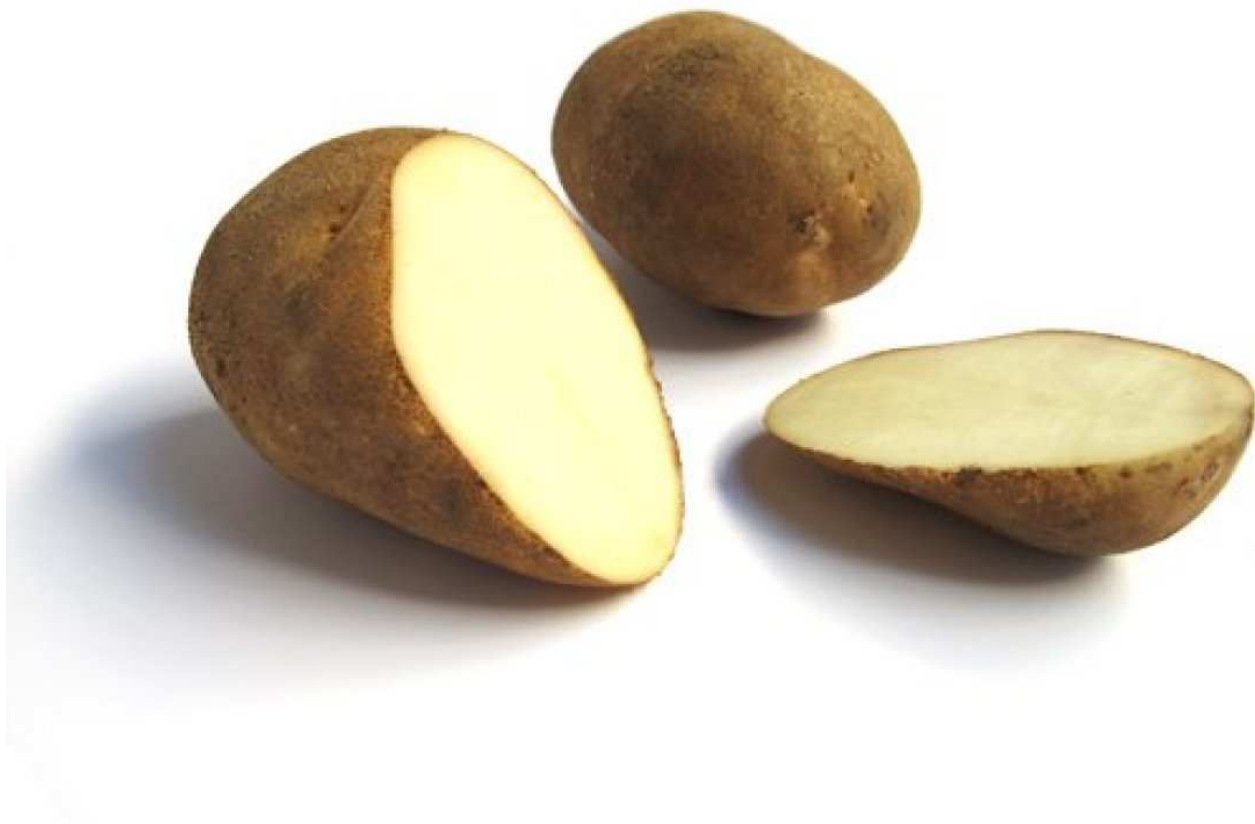


Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Purple Peruvian potatoes have deep purple skin and flesh. The flesh is either uniform throughout or marbled with white and deep, inky purple. They're earthy and slightly nutty, with an almost buttery aftertaste. They have a dry and starchy texture and are best for boiling, baking, roasting, frying and grilling, although they should work in all dishes and preparations.

- 3

Idaho Russet -- Starchy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Idaho Russet potatoes are russet-skinned with white flesh. They're what we typically imagine when we think of potatoes. They have a neutral potato flavor, a fluffy, creamy and soft texture, and are best for baking, mashing and making French fries. They're also very absorbent, so are great paired with butter and cream -- think mashed potatoes. Just don't try using Idaho Russets for potato salads, gratins or any dish that requires the potatoes to hold their shape.

- 4
Katahdin -- Starchy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Katahdin potatoes are your French fry potatoes. They have smooth skin with yellowish flesh, and a classic potato flavor. They're fluffy, creamy, smooth and soft, and best for boiling, baking and, most importantly, making French fries. They're not great for potato salads, gratins potatoes or any dish that requires the potatoes to hold their shape.

- 5

Red Bliss -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Red Bliss potatoes have bright red skin with creamy white flesh. They're slightly bitter, and have a firm, moist and waxy texture. They're best for soups, stews, boiling, roasting, potato salad and casseroles, and worst for mashing.

- 6

New Potatoes -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

New potatoes are defined as any type of potato that's harvested young, before its sugars have fully converted to starch. You can get many different types of them. They're small and round with thin skin, and depending on the type, they may vary in color. They're sweet, firm, creamy and very waxy. Use them for boiling, steaming, roasting or in soups, but don't use them for baking.

- 7
Adirondack Blue -- Waxy

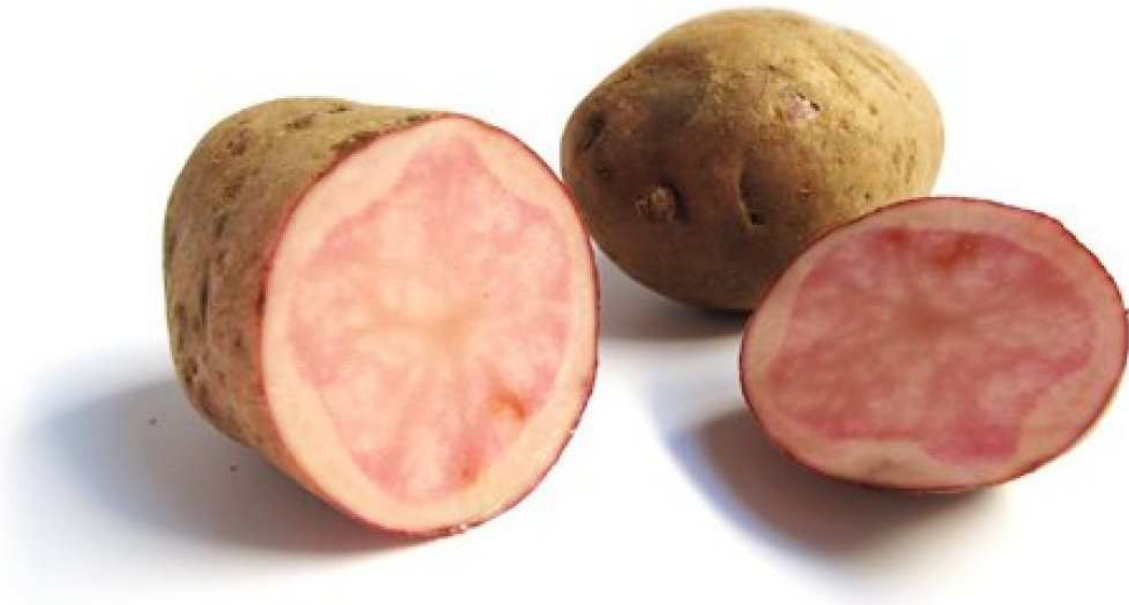


Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Adirondack Blue potatoes have purple skin and bright blue-purple flesh that fades to a shade of blue when mashed, and deepens in shade when roasted. They have an earthy, rich and nutty flavor, and a firm, creamy and apple-like texture. They're great for mashing, baking, boiling, steaming, potato salads, casseroles or gratins, and worst for soups.

- 8

Adirondack Red -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Adirondack Red potatoes have red skin with pink to red flesh that's either opaque or in a starburst pattern. Their color fades with boiling, but fades only slightly to a shade of mauve after other methods of cooking. They're slightly sweet, with a moist, meaty and waxy texture. Use them for boiling, mashing, pan frying and microwaving, but don't use them in soups.

- 9

Fingerling -- Waxy

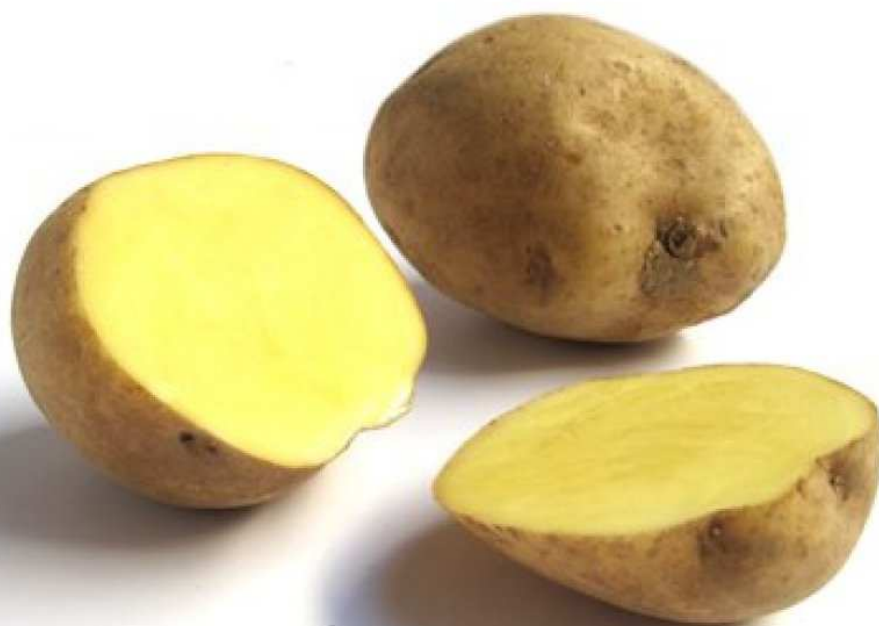


Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Fingerlings are two to three inches long and thin (finger-shaped, duh) with thin, buff-yellow skin and light yellow flesh. Their flavor is mild, nutty and earthy, and their texture firm and moist. They're great for boiling, baking, roasting and potato salads, and bad for soups.

- 10

Carola -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Carola potatoes are oblong with yellow skin and yellow flesh. They have a strong, classic potato flavor with earthy and buttery notes. They have a firm, creamy and waxy texture, and are best for grilling, roasting, boiling, steak fries, potato salads, casseroles and gratins. Don't use them in soups.

- 11

Inca Gold -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Inca Gold potatoes have golden skin, yellow flesh and a round dumpling shape. Their earthy and nutty flavor and creamy, smooth and firm texture makes them great for roasting, mashing, boiling, potato salads, casseroles and gratins. They're worst for soups.

- 12

Rose Gold -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Rose Gold potatoes have rose-red skin and yellow flesh. They're mild and earthy, firm and moist, and best for baking, steaming, boiling, potato salads, casseroles and gratins. Just don't try to mash these guys.

- 13

Purple Viking -- Waxy



Joseph Erdos/The Huffington Post

Purple Viking potatoes are small in size with dark purple skin and white flesh. They're meaty, slightly sweet and buttery, and have a creamy and moist texture. They're best for baking, roasting, boiling, potato salads, casseroles and gratins, and worst for soups.

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