Varieties

Information, Ideas and activities for lessons

Lesson Content

• A brief history of potatoes
• Number of varieties grown worldwide
• Three main types of potato: Fluffy, Smooth, Salad
• Matching potato types to cooking methods

Activity Ideas

• Taste test
• Writing instructions
• Designing a new potato salad
• Designing food packaging

www.cookyourownpotatoes.org.uk
**What is a potato?**

A potato is definitely not ‘just a potato’

- Over 4000 edible varieties grown throughout the world
- Many different colours, shapes and sizes
- They are tubers and grow underground

[Image of potato varieties and plant]
## Varieties

### A brief history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4000 BC</td>
<td>Discovered in Peru over 6,000 years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1536</td>
<td>Brought to Europe by Spanish, having conquered Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1589</td>
<td>Sir Walter Raleigh introduced to Ireland in 1589</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840s</td>
<td>The Potato Famine – 1m died in Ireland when ‘Potato Blight’ wiped out the potato crop</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>King Edward potato variety introduced at time of Coronation of King Edward VII</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940’s</td>
<td>Potato production doubled, potatoes replaced flour and other ingredients during WWII. Potato Pete promoted potatoes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Potatoes became the first food grown in space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>300m tonnes potatoes grown globally</td>
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</tbody>
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[www.cookyourownpotatoes.org.uk](http://www.cookyourownpotatoes.org.uk)
British Potatoes

Britain is one of the world’s largest potato producers

- 5.4 million tonnes grown every year
- 100 varieties in 50 counties
- Availability depends on region and season
- 80% of potatoes grown in Britain are eaten in Britain
New varieties

Specialist breeders develop new, improved varieties

- Better resistance to pests and diseases
- Better storage
- Greater nutrition
- Increased yield
- Consistency for better processing
- Improved quality, appearance
- Reduced need for inputs such as water and fertiliser

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Know your potatoes

- Three different types of potato:
  - Fluffy
  - Smooth
  - Salad

- To get the right results you need to choose the right type of potato for the cooking method you have chosen.
The science of potatoes

• Different potatoes have different textures when cooked

• Vary from fluffy to smooth due to cell changes during cooking
  – Starch absorbs water
  – Starch cells swell and begin to break down
  – New potatoes hold their shape best because starch cells are less mature
Activity 1
Varieties Taste Test

Learning Outcomes:
• To be able to cook potatoes in different ways
• To describe taste and texture
• To understand different potatoes suit different methods

• Choose a cooking method: boiling, mashing or baking
• Take a sample of a fluffy, smooth and salad potato
• Cook each potato in the same way
• Taste test the three samples
• Record findings, using 5 words to describe each type when cooked
• Which potato performed best in the test?
• Compare findings with professional recommendations
• Compile a mind map to highlight the versatility of potatoes
• Discuss the properties that made the potatoes suited (or not) to the cooking method

Variation/extension:
Choose one type of potato only and cook in three different ways
Activity 2
Writing instructions

Learning Outcomes:
• To write instructional copy
• To write for a variety of audiences
• To transfer knowledge to others

• Choose one of the cooking methods’ skills videos on the website
• Watch the skill closely
• Write step-by-step instructions to explain this cooking skill to someone who does not know how to do it
• Think about who you are writing for.
  – Is it a child or adult?
  – Someone of the same age?
  – Someone with language difficulties

Remember:
Include details of which type or varieties of potatoes to use

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Activity 3
Invent a potato salad

Prepare

• Watch the skills video for boiling potatoes and the recipe videos demonstrating potato salads
• Think about ingredients, appearance, aroma, flavour, texture

Invent

• Invent a potato salad using potatoes and four other ingredients. Budget is maximum 1-2 pounds

Cook and assess

• Assess the dish for appearance, flavour, texture and aroma
• Give a 1-5 star rating for each and record results in a table
• How could the recipe be improved? Vary the cooking time? Prepare differently? Different ingredients? Different potato?
• How could your recipe be healthier? Or adapted for someone with special dietary needs?

Learning Outcomes:
• To understand how food are assessed
• To understand how to devise, adapt and improve recipes

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**Activity 3a**
**Designing food packaging**

**Prepare**
- Name the potato salad
- What are the key things to tell people about?
- What type of packaging would be best? Think about where it will be stored/displayed

**Design**
- Plan and design packaging for the potato salad
- Identify key messages, straplines, other information
- Think about a logo style

**Marketing**
- How will you tell people about it?
- What are the key messages?
- Remember to be clear about your audience

**Tip:** Visit [www.lovepotatoes.org.uk](http://www.lovepotatoes.org.uk) for inspirational potato salad recipe ideas

**Learning Outcomes:**
- To design packaging for a food product
- Writing for different audiences

www.cookyourownpotatoes.org.uk