



FEBRUARY IS
 POTATO LOVER'S
 MONTH

Potatoes are America's favorite vegetable—and for good reason. Not only are they delicious, versatile and a great economy value, but now potatoes have a better nutrition story than ever before. New studies show that a medium potato (1/3 pound) provides 50 percent of the U.S. RDA of vitamin C, 15 percent of vitamin B6 and iodine, 10 percent of niacin, and 8 percent of thiamin, iron, folacin, phosphorus, magnesium and copper. The potato also has the most potassium, 750 mg., of any commonly eaten food and provides 2,710 mg. of dietary fiber. And all that nutrition is packed into only 110 calories, with little sodium and no fat.

There's no better time to celebrate the potato's important nutritional contribution than now, because February is Potato Lover's Month. You'll find good prices and potatoes are always a family favorite. Here are recipes to show just how versatile the potato can be, but don't forget the all-time favorite "plain" potato-baked, mashed, boiled and French fried.

Ladies Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas

Lancaster Extension Home Economist

To Bake: Scrub, pat dry and prick the potato in several places with a fork. This allows steam to escape, preventing the potato from bursting. In a conventional oven: A medium potato (three per pound) will bake in 40-45 minutes at 400°F. But if you're cooking other foods at the same time, the potato easily adapts. Just adjust the time according to the temperature. Bake directly on oven rack or on a cookie sheet. Potatoes are done when they are soft when gently squeezed with a mitted hand. Don't wrap potatoes in foil as it steams, not bakes, the potato. In a microwave oven: Use uniformly-sized potatoes. On a double layer of paper toweling or paper plate, place potatoes in a spoke fashion with smaller ends toward center. "Baking" time is usually four minutes for a medium to large potato (six ounces), plus one to two minutes for each additional potato. Turn potatoes halfway through baking and allow five minutes "standing time," since potatoes will continue to cook after removal from oven.

To Mash: Prepare boiled or steamed potatoes (see below); drain, peel. Using a potato masher, electric mixer or ricer, mash potatoes. Gradually add milk, salt and pepper to taste, and if you like,

NEWARK, Del. — Does a visit to your bank make you feel like Rip Van Winkle? Since 1980, financial services have undergone such rapid and profound changes that it may seem as if you've been asleep for 20 years. Suddenly, banking is no longer a simple passbook transaction between you and your friendly teller. Today's array of checking and savings options requires a guidebook, says

a bit of butter or margarine (use skim milk if you're counting calories). The texture of the potatoes will depend on the amount of milk used. The more milk, the creamier and thinner the potatoes will be.

To Boil Or Steam: In a heavy saucepan with tight-fitting lid, cook potatoes in about one-inch of boiling salted water until fork-tender. To steam, place potatoes on wire rack in pan and add water to just below level of rack. Whole, 30 to 40 minutes; cut-up, 20 to 25 minutes.

To French Fry: Cut raw potatoes into strips about 1/4-inch thick. Toss strips into a bowl of ice and water to keep crisp and white while cutting the remainder. Don't soak. Pat the strips dry with paper towels. Heat about four inches of salad oil to 390°F. In a deep fat fryer or heavy saucepan. Place a layer of potato strips in a wire basket and immerse basket in hot fat; or place strips, a few at a time, directly into the hot oil. Cook about five minutes or until golden brown and tender. Drain well on paper towels.

Investigate bank services before selecting

Delaware extension urban home economist Mary Alice Morris.

As a consumer, you can make money from these changes—if you arm yourself with knowledge. Higher interest rates are the good news. But if you barely make it from paycheck to paycheck, higher bank fees may whittle away at your earnings.

To choose the account that's right for you, decide which services you need, and compare costs and rates of return. Investigate the options at several institutions.

As Rip might well have asked, why is there suddenly so much choice?

The revolution in banking was spawned by computer technology. It gathered momentum when rising interest rates of the late 1970s and '80s spurred savers to move their money from low-yielding bank passbook accounts into high-yielding money market funds offered by brokerage houses. In reaction, the deregulation acts of 1980 and 1982 lifted restrictions on banks. Ever since, they have been vying with brokerage houses, savings and loan institutions, and other companies to offer one-stop service.

Some of the most interesting one-stop package deals combine more than savings and checking. Like the cash management accounts introduced originally by brokerage houses, they allow you to pay bills by check or electronic fund transfer and to put money into savings. Some such accounts also allow you to buy or sell securities

through a broker, use a debit or credit card, buy real estate and insurance, or borrow money.

Every financial institution seems to offer a different combination of services, different rates of return, different terms, and a different minimum initial deposit, Morris says. If the options make your head spin, however, don't expect much guidance from your teller. Even at your local bank, a personal relationship with a teller may soon be the exception. As automated teller machines proliferate, tellers will become too expensive, branch banks will close, and chances of dealing with a person, let alone a person you know, will decrease, especially if you're a "small saver."

As electronic transfer of funds becomes more common, another familiar procedure, the return of your cancelled checks, may also be doomed, Morris says. But for the banks' fear of consumer resistance, the service would have disappeared already. Inevitably, checks will one day be "truncated." While you may have a carbon copy of your itemized monthly statement as proof of payment, you'll likely have to pay a fee to obtain the original check.

Technology will play an even greater role in the future, Morris says. Banking from your car has become a familiar convenience. Some day we'll all be banking from home with our personal computer and a telephone hookup.

It's enough to make Rip pluck his beard in consternation.



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