

A Sampling of Potato Varieties

There are about 3,000 varieties of potatoes in all, only about 100 of which are regularly grown. Each one has its own unique color, taste, shape and texture, from the nutty-flavored White Rose to the shiny and earthy Purple Peruvian.

Russets: High-starch russets have a brown skin and white flesh. Their floury texture when cooked makes them the ideal choice for baking and a good choice for mashed potatoes.

Some major varieties:

- Burbank
- Centennial
- Norgold

Long Whites: Oval, with a thin, light tan skin and tiny “eyes,” Long Whites (also called New Whites) are medium-starch potatoes. Good for boiling and pan-frying, but also a good all-purpose potato.

Major variety:

- White Rose

Round Whites: Round, with smooth, light tan skin—also called Eastern Potatoes. Round Whites are low-starch potatoes, ideal for scalloped potatoes, roasting and potato salads.

Some major varieties:

- Katahdin
- Superior
- Chippewa

Round Reds: With rosy red skin with white flesh, these potatoes are generally round, though some may be more oblong. Small red potatoes harvested before they reach maturity are low in starch and sweet in flavor. Often marketed as “new potatoes,” they are good for boiling, roasting, slicing into potato salads and roasting.

Some major varieties:

- La Rouge
- Red La Soda
- Red Pontiac

Yellow Flesh: Many feel this variety has a mild buttery texture. This lends itself well to baking, mashing and roasting.

Some major varieties:

- Yukon Gold
- Yellow Finn

Blue and Purple: These relatively uncommon tubers have flesh that ranges in hue from dark blue or lavender to white. They have a somewhat nutty flavor. Microwaving preserves the color best, but steaming and baking are also good preparation methods.

Some major varieties:

- Purple Peruvian
- All Blue