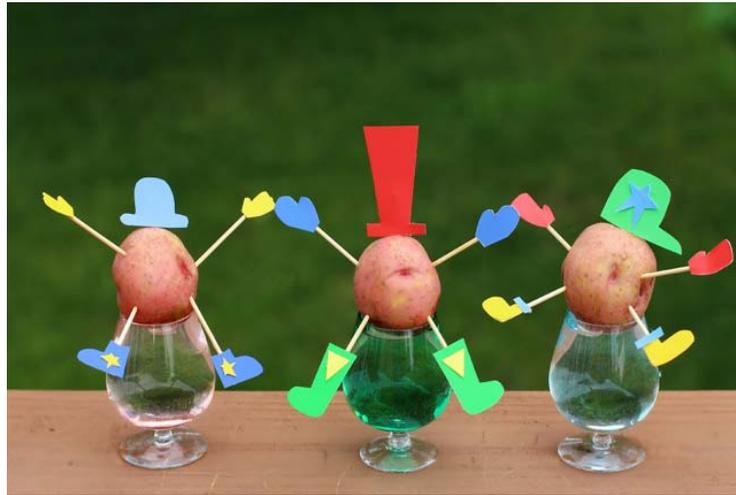




Zion Farmers Market KidCraft

Potato Sprout People



Part science project and part cute craft, potato sprout people are simply potatoes with toothpicks decorated like boots, hats and gloves poked inside! Once decorated, you can make the potatoes sprout by placing them in water. Learn how now!

Supplies

potatoes
colorful card stock paper (or paint chip samples)
toothpicks
small glass of water
scissors
glue

Instructions

Cut out shapes of shoes, hands (gloves) and hats from your card stock paper. Use your imagination - there is no limit with what you can design! Add as much or as little detail as you wish.

Glue the shoes, hands and hats onto toothpicks using a small dab of glue.

Insert the toothpicks into the potato. Position each toothpick to sit on the rim of a glass or to prop the potato on rim of the glass as seen in the pictures.

Fill a glass with water and sit your potato person so that the bottom is touching the water. This way your little friend will sprout!

That's it! Be sure to place your new little creations near a window so they will have plenty of light to sprout!

Potato Facts for Kids

Top o'the day t'you. Sure it's grand that you dropped by. Oh yes, it's a rare and colourful history we have, to be sure, so sit back and I'll tell you more about us.

We're a close relative of tomatoes, you know, and capsicums and eggplants too. Our tubers are like washed river stones, rather smooth and rounded, varying in size and shape from round or oval to long and thin. We're covered in a fine, thin skin which encloses our soft, moist flesh. Our skin colour varies from creamy-to-white, yellow, red to even purple.

Availability

We're available all year round with our best value being from May to August.

Did you know?

- Keeping us in the dark avoids 'greening', which may make us poisonous
- We became fashionable when Marie Antoinette paraded through the French countryside wearing potato blossoms in her hair
- We're a member of the nightshade family, Solanaceae. The nightshade family has many members which are poisonous but we're not
- We're also called 'spuds', 'talties' and 'praties'.

Varieties

We're sold by variety, size and whether we're washed or not. Washed - the soil covering has been washed or brushed away. Unwashed - we're sold with a thin coating of soil. Either way, we may or may not be sold by variety as well. Small potatoes are sold as cocktails and chats and are usually used whole. New potatoes are thin-skinned, moist potatoes which should be used quickly.



Sebago

(the most common variety) - we're an all-purpose potato with smooth, thin, creamy-white skin and white flesh. We're generally round to oval in shape with shallow eyes and are excellent for boiling, mashing and are popular when made into French fries.



Pontiac

We have a bright red thin skin (which is difficult to peel due to our deep eyes). We're roundish in shape with white flesh, and deep set eyes. We're excellent for boiling, roasting, baking and for salads as we are easy to cook.



Desiree

We're long and oval with a smooth, waxy, pinkish red skin with creamy-yellow flesh. We're very popular and can be baked, boiled, mashed, microwaved, roasted and are also great in salads.



Pink Fir Apple

We're a tubular-shaped potato with a pinkish skin and firm, waxy, creamy-white flesh. We originate from the USA and love to be boiled, baked and microwaved.



Kipfler

German in origin, we're a long, oval potato with yellow skin and flesh and a really nutty taste. We're usually braised, boiled, microwaved or used in a salad.



Pink Eye (also known as Tasmanian Pink Eye)

We're a small, oval to round potato with a creamy skin colour, blushed with purple. Our eyes are small. We're most suited to boiling, baking, roasting, microwaving and salads.



Russet Burbank (also known as the Idaho potato)

We're a long, large potato with a rough brown skin and white flesh. We're excellent for making french fries, baking and roasting.



Spunta

We originated in Holland and have a large, flattish, oval shape with smooth, yellowish skin without eyes. We have a creamy coloured flesh. We're suited to boiling, baking, mashing, microwaving and deep-frying.



Nicola

We're a small to medium, round to oval-shaped potato with a beige-yellow skin and yellow flesh. We're a purpose potato but especially good for boiling, mashing and microwaving.

Newer 'boutique' varieties are available and more and more are coming onto the market. They vary considerably in shape, skin and flesh. Bintje, King Edward, Jersey Royal, Ratte, Purple Congo and Nadine are just some of these newer potatoes.

Why Potatoes Are Good To Eat

- Contrary to popular belief it would be hard to get fat on potatoes because we're so filling that you'd feel full long before you'd eaten enough of us to make you fat. It's only when we're made into chips, fries or crisps, or served with sour cream, butter or margarine that we become potentially fattening.
- We're a good reliable source of vitamin C
- We're also a source of potassium and dietary fiber and we supply niacin (vitamin B3) .
- Our starchy carbohydrates give you energy for physical activity and we're especially handy if you want some quick glucose for playing sport or doing any strenuous physical activity.
- We have virtually no fat of our own.

How Potatoes are Grown and Harvested

We're small, green-leaved, plants which grow up to 50cm tall. As we grow our roots swell at their ends producing tubers (potatoes). Each plant consists of a number of small leaves attached to the main shoot by small stems.

We do blossom but our potatoes don't come from fertilised flowers. We form as a food store (tuber) at the end of our roots. Depending on our variety we take 90-130 days to reach maturity. If we are harvested before we reach maturity we're generally called a new potato, at which time our skin will be paper thin and easy to rub off.

Harvesting is determined chiefly by the maturity of the crop. When our tubers are fully grown, our stems and leaves die, and we're ready to harvest.

The main reason for waiting until we're fully matured before digging is that our skins 'harden' after the vine dies, so there is less likelihood of bruising. We're generally mechanically harvested and collected in field bins for grading (according to size) and packaging. There are normally three grades, smalls, table and large. A further grade, called chits is also used when large quantities of small potatoes are available.

Choosing Potatoes

Select those of us that have firm, dry skin.

How to Keep Potatoes

Store us in a cool, dry, dark and well-ventilated place. Use within 7 days.

History of Potatoes

We originated in the Andes Mountains of South America and were used as long ago as 4000 BC. We were a major food source for South American Indian tribes in the 11th century and were recorded as being widely cultivated by the Incas in the early 1400's.

The first European record of us was in Spain in the 16th century, after being brought back from Columbia in 1593 by the Spanish Conquistadors. From Spain we spread quickly throughout Europe, reaching England in the late 16th century.

In England, Ireland and Scotland it took 200 years for us to be accepted as human food rather than for animal feed. When the Irish accepted us as a satisfying and nutritious food their population expanded rapidly because for the first time they were getting adequate nourishment.

However, a potato disease appeared in 1845 wiping out most of the Irish crop. This continued for several years resulting in widespread starvation in Ireland and over 1 million people died. As a result many Irish migrated to the USA and Australia in one of the largest exodus of people in recent history.

One of the most widely used and important vegetables, we're the fourth most important food crop in the world.

Fun Ways to Eat and Cook Potatoes

Sometimes called 'spuds', we're a very popular and versatile vegetable and can be baked, boiled, fried, barbecued, microwaved or roasted.

Scrub us with a brush and cook with the skin on, but remove any green sections. If skins have to be removed, peel thinly with a vegetable peeler and cook as soon as peeled.