



# POTATO FACTS

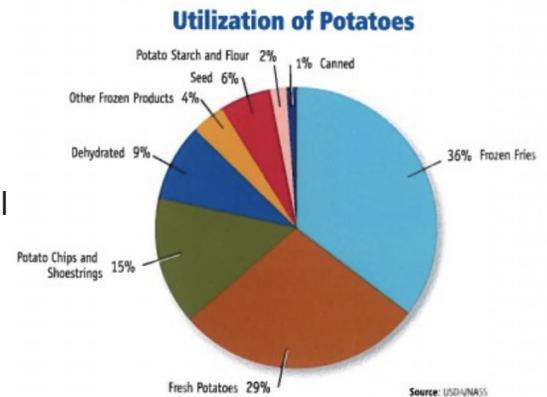
★ The first potatoes were cultivated in Peru around 8,000 B.C. to 5,000 B.C. When the Spanish Conquistadors conquered Peru, they discovered the flavors of the potato, and took them home to Europe. The potato was introduced to Ireland in 1589 by Sir Walter Raleigh.

★ Peter Glazebrook is an amateur gardener that grew the world's biggest potato. The potato tipped the scales at a whopping 8lbs 4oz.

★ China is the world's top potato producer followed by India, Russia, and Ukraine. The United States is the 5th largest producer of potatoes in the world. The 2018 total value of the potato crop was \$3.71 billion.

★ The ideal growing temperature for potatoes is 60° to 70°F; temperatures greater than 80°F are too warm for potatoes.

★ According to [idahopotato.com](http://idahopotato.com) the U.S. per capita potato consumption is a total of 112 pounds. This consumption includes frozen, fresh, chips, dehydrated, and canned potatoes. German per capita consumption is twice as much as the U.S.



## Top 10 Producing States (in billion pounds)

1	Idaho	12.7
2	Washington	9.8
3	Wisconsin	2.5
4	Colorado	2.3
5	Oregon	2.3
6	North Dakota	1.9
7	Minnesota	1.7
8	California	1.5
9	Michigan	1.5
10	Maine	1.4

2011 crop.  
Source: USDA/NASS

★ Potatoes are made up of potassium, vitamin C, fiber, and starch. Potatoes are about 80% water and 20% solids.

★ Each potato plant can harvest an average of five to ten potatoes depending on care and variety. In 1974, an Englishman named Eric Jenkins grew 370 pounds of potatoes from one plant.

★ Potatoes are often thought of as roots because they usually grow in the ground. But technically they are starchy, enlarged modified stems called tubers, which grow on short branches called stolons from the lower parts of potato plants.

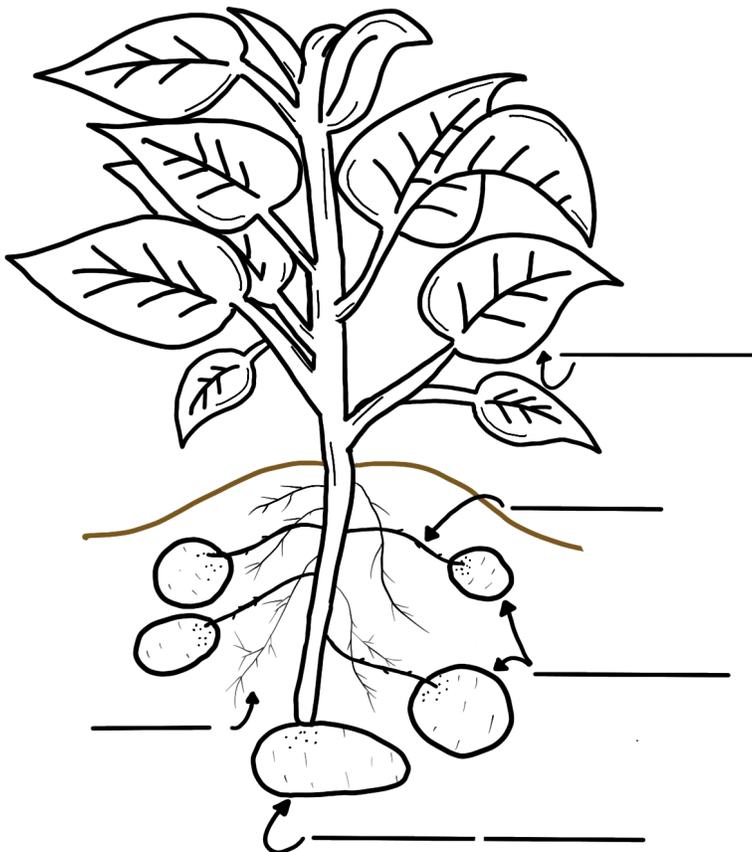
★ The sweet potato is not actually part of the potato family. The sweet potato belongs in the same family as morning glories while the white potato belongs in the same group as tomatoes, tobacco, eggplant, chile pepper, and the petunia.

★ In October 1995, NASA and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, created the technology that made it possible to grow potatoes in space. The goal was to feed astronauts on long space voyages, and eventually, feed future space colonies.

★ "French Fries" were introduced to America by Thomas Jefferson when he served them at a White House Dinner.

After reading the potato facts, answer the following potato questions:

What state produces the most potatoes?	Where does California rank in the top 10 potato producing states?	Why would scientists create technology to grow potatoes in space?
What is the German per capita consumption of potatoes?	How many potatoes grow on the average potato plant?	
What is the ideal temperature for growing potatoes?	Is your local weather this week ideal for growing potatoes?	How long ago were the first potatoes cultivated?
Where were potatoes believed to first be cultivated?	Use Google Maps to find out how far it is from your town to the capital of Peru?	What is your favorite way to eat potatoes?



Use the **BOLD** words to fill out the potato plant diagram.

Contrary to popular belief, potatoes are not a root but instead a thickened stem.

The **LEAVES** of the potato plant die back when the **TUBERS** (potatoes) ready for harvest.

The **ROOTS** provide support for the production of tubers.

Potato plants grow from potatoes planted in the ground called seed potatoes. The **MOTHER TUBER** is the original seed potato planted with the intent to reproduce more potatoes.

Potatoes grown on underground stems, called **STOLONS**.