

10 Things you didn't know about Potatoes



The potato industry is moving away from the perception as a commodity sector into educating consumers about varieties under a new shopper-driven classification system, launched at this year's Potato Week (1-7 October). In celebration of this, Potato Council is hosting a tasting session in the Debate restaurant on Wednesday 24 October between 12.45pm and 2pm. Potatoes have been a staple of our diets for centuries so you may have thought you knew everything there was to know about them, but we have put together this factsheet with ten surprising things about this Great British crop.

The potato industry is a vital component of the UK economy

- 01 The potato industry is worth a total of £4.7bn. This equates to £947m at farm gate level and £3.8bn at consumer level.
- 02 The industry uses a highly skilled workforce employing at least 16,000 people.
- 03 In Great Britain there are 2,500 potato growers producing approximately 6m tonnes per year.

Potatoes: healthy, sustainable and excellent value

- 04 14% of the entire contribution of Britain's Vitamin C comes from potatoes.¹
- 05 Potatoes are naturally fat-free and lower in calories than white rice and pasta.²
- 06 The potato industry is committed to reducing its environmental footprint. Over the past 30 years, the potato sector has reduced fertiliser use by 30%.
- 07 Potatoes are a good value for money food option. Over the past year the average price paid per kg of potatoes, enough to feed a family of five, was 66p. Potato consumption is highest in lower incomes households (less than £20,000 per annum) than those where average income is £20,000+.

About us: Potato Council

- 08 Potato Council is funded by levies raised from potato growers, purchasers and processors. Its role is to be a knowledge house for the potato industry and to sustain demand for domestic potatoes.
- 09 The Many Faces of Potatoes campaign is a programme for the promotion of fresh potatoes across GB, France and Belgium. Potato Council secured co-financing from the European Commission promotions scheme to support activities for 2010-2013.
- 10 In partnership with the industry, Potato Council delivers the Grow Your Own Potatoes programme. This involved 14,600 schools in 2012 and a total of 1.2m primary school children have participated since 2004. Children can grow and harvest their own potatoes and through lesson plans learn about healthy balanced diets.



This briefing has been drafted by Potato Council, a division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). It is funded by levies raised from potato growers, purchasers and processors. It is a knowledge house for the potato supply chain; to improve the competitiveness of the potato industry; and to sustain demand for potatoes. AHDB is a Non-Departmental Public Body representing, amongst other things, the potato industry in Great Britain.

1: National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Headline Results from Year 1 of the Rolling Programme 2008/2009, B. Bates, A. Lennox & G. Swan, Food Standards Agency & Department of Health, 2010.

2: Potato Consumption in the UK – why is 'meat and two veg no longer the traditional British meal?', H. Riley, BNF Nutrition Bulletin, Volume 35, September 2010, pp 320-331.

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