



Farming food for you

Potatoes

Great Britain produces about 5.4 million tonnes of potatoes a year, an average of 80kg for every person in the country. These are grown by about 1,700 potato growers.



Maris Piper



Lanorma



Rooster



Charlotte

Planting and growing

Farmers use big machines to loosen the soil and make beds or ridges for potato planting.

Some seed potatoes are left to grow sprouts, known as chitting, before they are planted.

The seed potatoes are planted about 15 cm deep.

Planting usually takes place in spring. Potatoes originally came from tropical South America and need warmth to grow.

Harvesting

Potatoes are harvested from early June to the end of October.

The potatoes are lifted by the harvester and are stored carefully to keep them safe.

Some potatoes are packed straight away to be sold, while others are kept for later in the year. Potatoes are also sent to be processed into mash, chips, crisps and other products.

Uses

Potatoes are used in a wide range of different dishes and meals, as well as side dishes and snacks.

The potato farm and the farmer

Potatoes are an important crop, as they are commonly eaten every day.

Potatoes are grown around Great Britain – about 78% in England, 20% in Scotland and 2% in Wales.

Potatoes will usually be grown in the same field for only one out of every six years, or even longer. This is known as crop rotation.

Potato farmers look after the environment by using less fertiliser than in the past. Some grow potatoes with more resistance to disease.

The potato

There are over 80 different potato varieties grown in the UK, each a different size, shape and colour. There are three main potato types – fluffy, salad and smooth.

Potatoes are known as tubers and grow under the ground.

Fluffy potatoes are good for roasting and baking, like Maris Piper and Rooster.

Salad potatoes are good for steaming and boiling, like Maris Peer and Charlotte.

Smooth potatoes are good for mashing or making wedges, like Lanorma and Mozart.



Planting potatoes



Spicy wedges



Lancashire hotpot