

P.E.I. Potato Industry



Prince Edward Island has a rich history of growing potatoes, and it is the largest potato producing province in Canada.

Potato Industry:

- Potato production is a major contributor to the Island economy, with over a billion dollars' worth of economic impact each year.
- On Prince Edward Island there are about 330 potato growers, with the grand majority of them being family farms.
- Some farms operate small acreages with labour from within their own family, while others employ people in their community to assist with operating equipment, crop scouting, grading, marketing, and more. Most potato farms grow multiple crops in rotation with their potatoes, and some also have livestock as part of a mixed farm operation.

What makes the Island ideal?

- Prince Edward Island has the highest percentage of arable land of any Canadian province. The small island has ideal growing conditions for its most famous crop. The red, sandy soil, rich in iron, is perfectly suited for potatoes, as it retains just the right amount of moisture during the growing season, but is then effectively cleansed over the winter.
- Warm summers, cold winters and adequate annual rainfall result in excellent growing conditions with the right balance of heat, light and water to maximize yields and tuber quality.
- Additionally, being an island provides a distinct advantage to PEI when it comes to growing potatoes. The ocean acts as a natural barrier against airborne or insect-borne diseases.
- As well, this easy access to the ocean facilitates transportation of the crop, while limited points of entry allow us to control the movement of potatoes into and out of the province.

Prince Edward Island Potatoes are grown for three specific markets:

1. Table potatoes, sold to retail and food service sectors
2. Processing potatoes, manufactured into French fries, potato chips, and many other products.
3. Seed potatoes, grown with high quality and health standards to yield future commercial potato crops.

The breakdown:

60% - processing

30% - fresh market

10% - seed purposes

- Seed and table potatoes are shipped to over 20 countries annually, including the United States, Puerto Rico, Ukraine, Italy, Thailand, and more!
- Shipping season begins in late July, with early or “new” potatoes hitting the market in Atlantic Canada. The main crop is harvested starting in September. Shipments to all markets begin at this time, with round white, reds and yellow varieties often available first and russet varieties available later in the autumn months.

Potato varieties:

- Russets - the most widely used potato variety. The most commonly used potato in making French Fries, but also great for fluffy mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, and scalloped potatoes. The Russet Burbank is the most popular variety, but other popular russet varieties include Goldrush, Ranger Russet and Russet Norkotah.
- Whites - this variety covers a wide range of shapes, sizes and growing seasons. Superiors are a round, white variety harvested early in the season and commonly sold as “new potatoes” in the summer months. Kennebec is another popular round white variety, excellent for making creamy mashed potatoes or used in potato salads, stews or soups. Round white varieties such as Atlantic and Dakota Pearl are popular in making potato chips. Shepody is a long white variety grown primarily as an early season potato for making French fries in PEI.
- Reds - Most red potatoes have a rosy, red skin and white flesh. These potatoes are well suited for roasting, boiling or steaming due to their moist, firm texture. They can also make a colourful addition to salads with the skin left on. Popular red varieties include Red Norland and Chieftain
- Yellows - With their golden coloured flesh that looks like butter has already been added, yellow varieties are becoming increasingly popular in North America. The most popular yellow variety is definitely the Yukon Gold, popular both in stores and restaurants. Another increasingly popular yellow variety is the Innovator, a longer potato than the Yukon Gold that is somewhat similar to a russet in appearance.

(peipotato.org)

Nutritional information:

One medium-size, 148 gram potato has 100 calories and zero fat, cholesterol or sodium. It contains 21% of your daily value of Potassium, 16% of daily Fibre, and 4 grams of protein. As well, 45% Vitamin C, 2% calcium and 10% of daily Iron.

Did you know?

The P.E.I. potato industry directly or indirectly employs 12% of the Island workforce.

At over 88,000 acres, PEI potatoes make up the largest commercial crop, covering 15% of Island farmland. (Peipotato.org)

(Prince Edward Island Potatoes)

Environmental sustainability:

- Island growers also practice environmentally sustainable farming practices and follow the most stringent environmental standards in Canada.

Prince Edward Island has the highest percentage of arable land of any Canadian province, while also being the most densely populated province. This means that we truly are farming “in our own backyards,” and as such, are committed to ensuring that our farming practices are both environmentally and economically sustainable.

(All info is from the Prince Edward Island Potato website or Facebook page)

PEI Potato and Vegetable Curry Recipe

Ingredients:

2 medium	PEI White Potatoes, large dice
1 tbsp (15 ml)	Vegetable Oil
1 medium	Onion, thinly sliced
1	Bay Leaf
½ tsp (2 ml)	Ginger Powder
1 tsp (5 ml)	Curry Powder
½ tsp	Chili Powder
3 cups (750 ml)	Vegetable Stock
1 cup (250 ml)	Turnip, large dice
2	Carrots, large dice
2	Plum tomatoes, large dice
1 cup (250 ml)	Cauliflower, small florets
½	Green Pepper, large dice
1 cup (250 ml)	Peas, fresh or frozen
to taste	Salt & Pepper

Directions:

1. Heat a large pot over medium-high heat; add oil.
2. Add onion and green pepper and cook for 5 minutes; stir in spices and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add vegetable stock, potatoes, turnip, carrots and stir.
4. Cover and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Add cauliflower; continue to simmer for 5 minutes or until tender.
6. Add peas and tomatoes and cook 1 to 2 minutes.
7. Season with salt & pepper; serve immediately.

P.E.I. Potato Industry Quiz

What are the three specific potato markets on PEI?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

What percent of PEI potatoes go to the fresh market? Circle one.

A. 20%

B. 60%

C. 30%

The shipping season for potatoes begins in _____ with “new” potatoes hitting the Atlantic Canada market.

The four potato varieties are:

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____

What variety of potato is most widely used? _____

What percent of the Island workforce is employed by the potato industry? _____

Potato crops cover over _____ acres of land, which makes up _____ percent of the total farmland on Prince Edward Island.

There is Vitamin C in potatoes.

True __ False __

Bonus:

Define arable.

Potato Quiz Answers

1. A) table potatoes B) processing potatoes C) seed potatoes
2. 30%
3. July
4. A) Russets B) Whites C) Reds D) Yellows
5. Russets
6. 12%
7. 88,000, 15%
8. True
9. (of land) used or suitable for growing crops