



Potato 101: Storage & Handling

Potatoes are easier to store & handle than many other types of produce. To increase sales & provide top-notch customer service keep in mind these standard practices for retail potato handling:

- At receiving, check produce as it arrives – note outages, shorts & spoilage. Remove any spoiled potatoes so that they do not negatively impact the rest of the order.
- Store between 45 & 50 degrees. As a rule, keep backstock in a cool, dark, well-ventilated area of the department or back room always protecting from direct light.
- Rotate inventory on a First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis. Make sure you place newer items in back to maintain proper rotation.
- Clearly stack boxes with received-on dates & variety visible.
- Storing potatoes exposed to excessive light will cause them to turn green and develop a bitter flavor, these can then end up as produce department shrink.
- Train staff to inform customers that it is best not to wash potatoes before storing, only wash then at cooking time. Small areas of green can be cut off just prior to cooking.
- Do not refrigerate or freeze potatoes; below 42°F the starch will begin to turn into sugar & is not desirable.

For best sales

- Rotate & clean displays daily or as needed for well-tended merchandising.
- Refrain from displaying in direct light, especially true for small stores with slower sales.
- Cross-promote with other products to enhance sales through merchandising.
- Use differentiation: place red varieties between bulk white as a color break, change up pack sizes &/or types of packaging.
- Provide different pack sizes & types of packaging for different customer or seasonal needs.
- Label: customers want to know where their food comes from.
- Purchase from Vermont producers.
- Present customers with variety & train staff to help them make decisions on types & uses.
- Smaller potatoes can have a big sales impact: easy to cook, fun to serve.
- Digital recipes & product information can help generate sales; cross promote with references to your prepared foods department.