

# WHITE VS. SWEET POTATOES: WHICH ARE REALLY HEALTHIER?

Think sweet potatoes are healthier than white potatoes? Or that you should avoid both because of carbs? Here's how these tubers compare — and why they both deserve a place in your diet.

## THE BASICS

Potatoes and sweet potatoes share a name, but botanically they're unrelated.

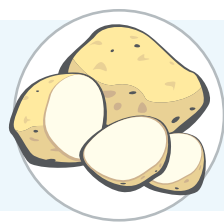
	PLANT FAMILY	PLANT RELATIVES	BIODIVERSITY	EDIBILITY
<b>POTATOES</b> (SOLANUM TUBEROSUM)	SOLANACEAE	Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, deadly nightshade	4,000 known varieties	Leaves and stems (and potatoes that have turned green) produce solanine, which is poisonous.
<b>SWEET POTATOES</b> (IPOMOEA BATATAS)	CONVOLVULACEAE	Morning glories and other vines, trees, shrubs, and herbs (note: not yams!)	5,000 known varieties	Leaves are edible and nutritious.

## CLAIM: SWEET POTATOES ARE THE 'SUPERFOOD'

If all you want is Vitamin A, then sure, sweet potatoes win. But when you pit them against white potatoes for overall nutritional value, it's a virtual tie.

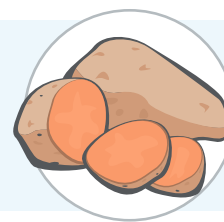
### POTATO

Medium, baked\*



### SWEET POTATO

Medium, baked



	POTATO	SWEET POTATO
<b>CALORIES</b>	161	103
<b>PROTEIN</b>	4.3 G	2.3 G
<b>FAT</b>	0	0
<b>CARBS</b>	37 G	24 G
<b>FIBER</b>	3.8 G	3.8 G
Percent daily recommended intake		
<b>VITAMIN A</b>	0%	438%
<b>VITAMIN C</b>	28%	37%
<b>VITAMIN B6</b>	27%	16%
<b>FOLATE (B9)</b>	12%	2%
<b>THIAMIN (B1)</b>	7%	8%
<b>RIBOFLAVIN (B2)</b>	5%	7%
<b>NIACIN (B3)</b>	12%	8%
<b>PANTOTHENIC ACID (B5)</b>	7%	10%
<b>MAGNESIUM</b>	12%	8%
<b>PHOSPHORUS</b>	12%	6%
<b>POTASSIUM</b>	26%	15%
<b>IRON</b>	10%	4%
<b>COPPER</b>	10%	9%
<b>MANGANESE</b>	19%	28%

9

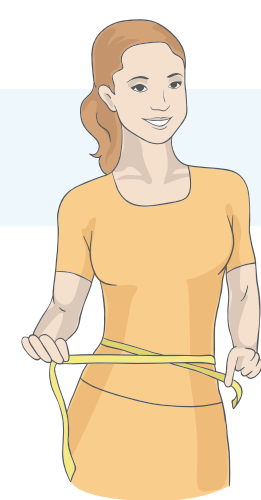
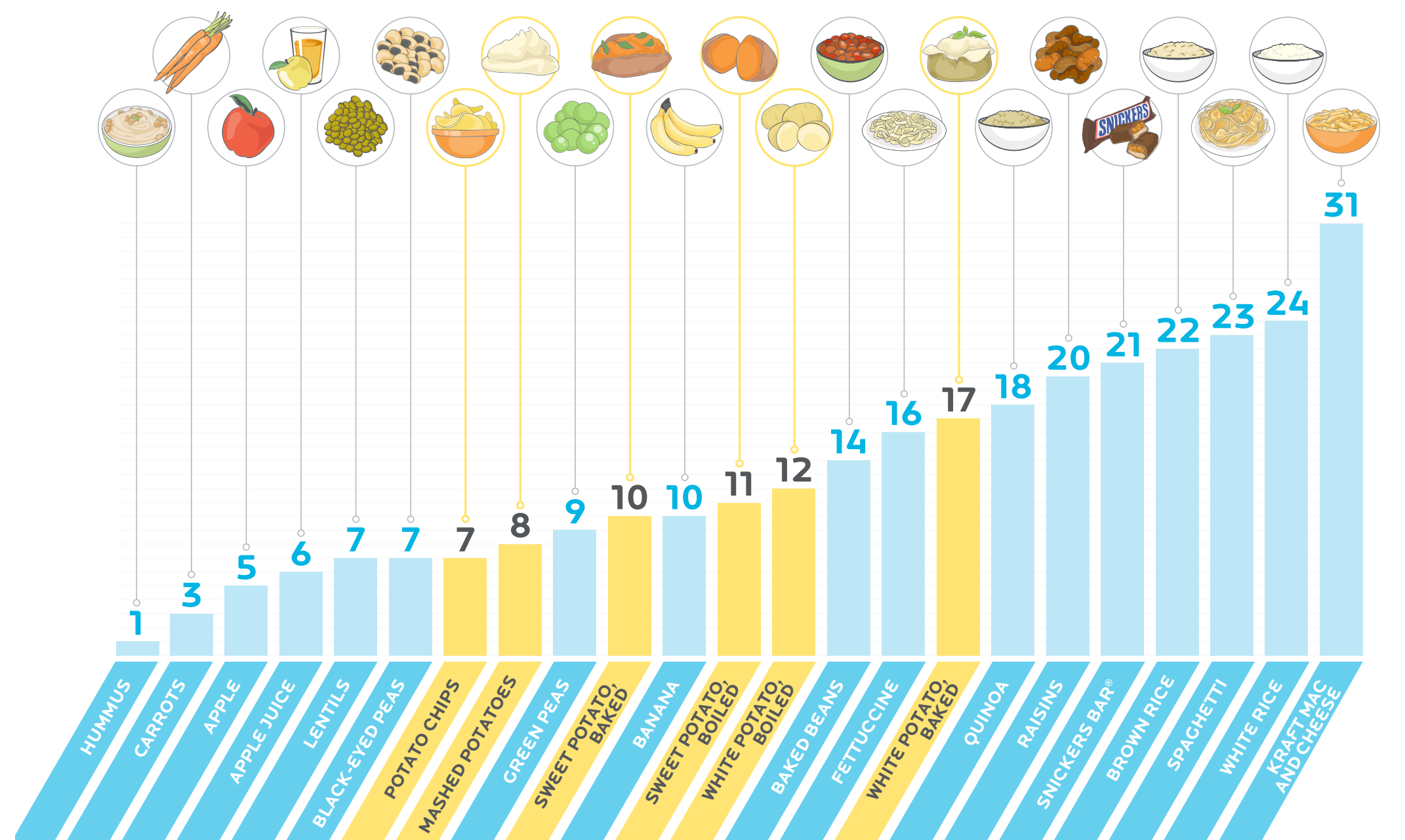


8

## CLAIM: AVOID POTATOES BECAUSE OF GLYCEMIC LOAD

Worried potatoes will make your blood sugar and appetite spike? Here's what the evidence says.

BOTH POTATOES AND SWEET POTATOES FALL IN THE MIDDLE TO HIGH RANGE ON THE GLYCEMIC LOAD (GL) SCALE.



BUT OVERALL, THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE DOESN'T SUPPORT GLYCEMIC LOAD STRONGLY AFFECTING:

- Appetite
- Body weight
- Inflammation
- Blood glucose control

Total carbohydrate and calorie intake has a much bigger impact on these health markers.

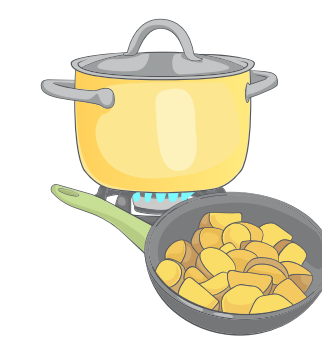
PLUS, GL IS GENERALLY IRRELEVANT TO HEALTH AND LEANNESS BECAUSE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR'S RESPONSE TO FOOD VARIES DEPENDING ON:



TIME OF DAY



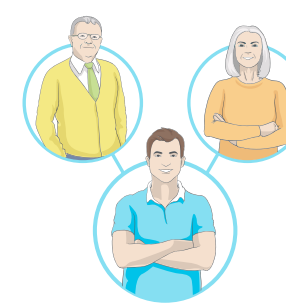
MEDICATIONS



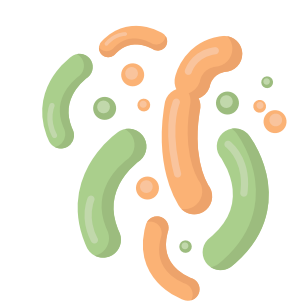
COOKING METHOD



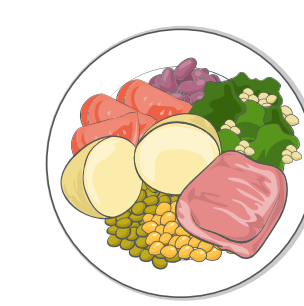
SLEEP QUANTITY AND QUALITY



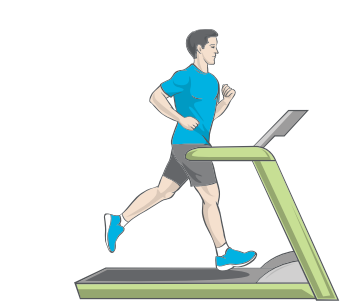
GENETICS



GUT BACTERIA



HOW MUCH PROTEIN, FIBER, AND HEALTHY FAT YOU EAT



ACTIVITY LEVEL

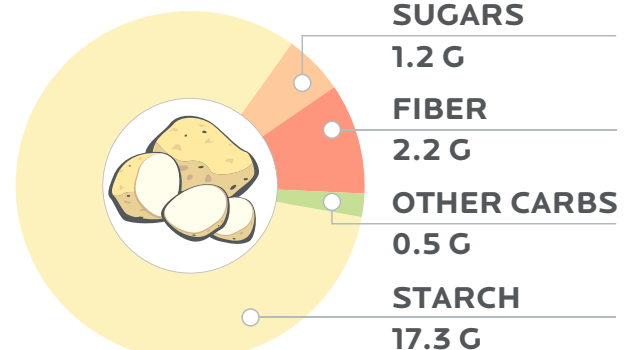
## CLAIM: AVOID ALL TUBERS BECAUSE OF CARBS

Think the carbs will cause weight gain? Actually, the carbs in potatoes and sweet potatoes are mostly starch and fiber, which help you stay lean and healthy.

### TYPES OF CARBOHYDRATES IN POTATOES AND SWEET POTATOES

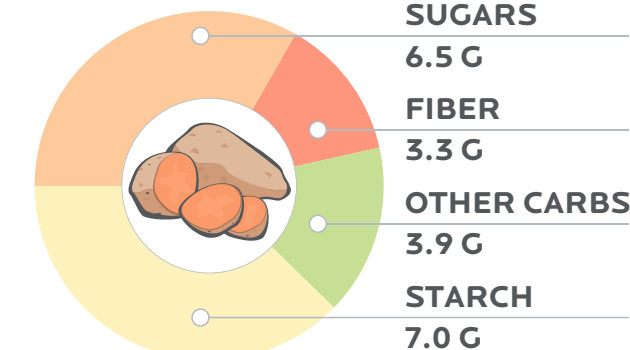
#### POTATOES

(Baked, 100 g)

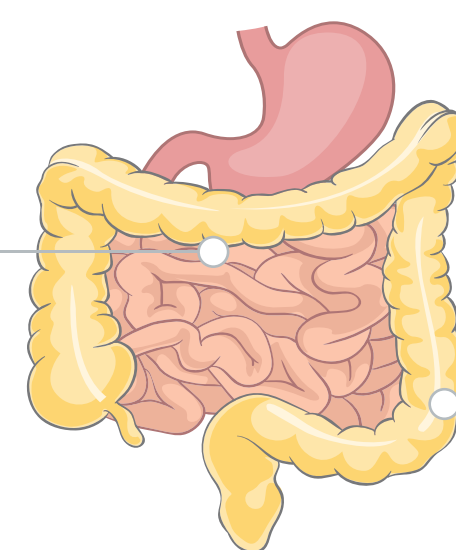


#### SWEET POTATOES

(Baked, 100 g)



Potatoes contain beneficial **resistant starch**, which, like fiber, doesn't digest at all.



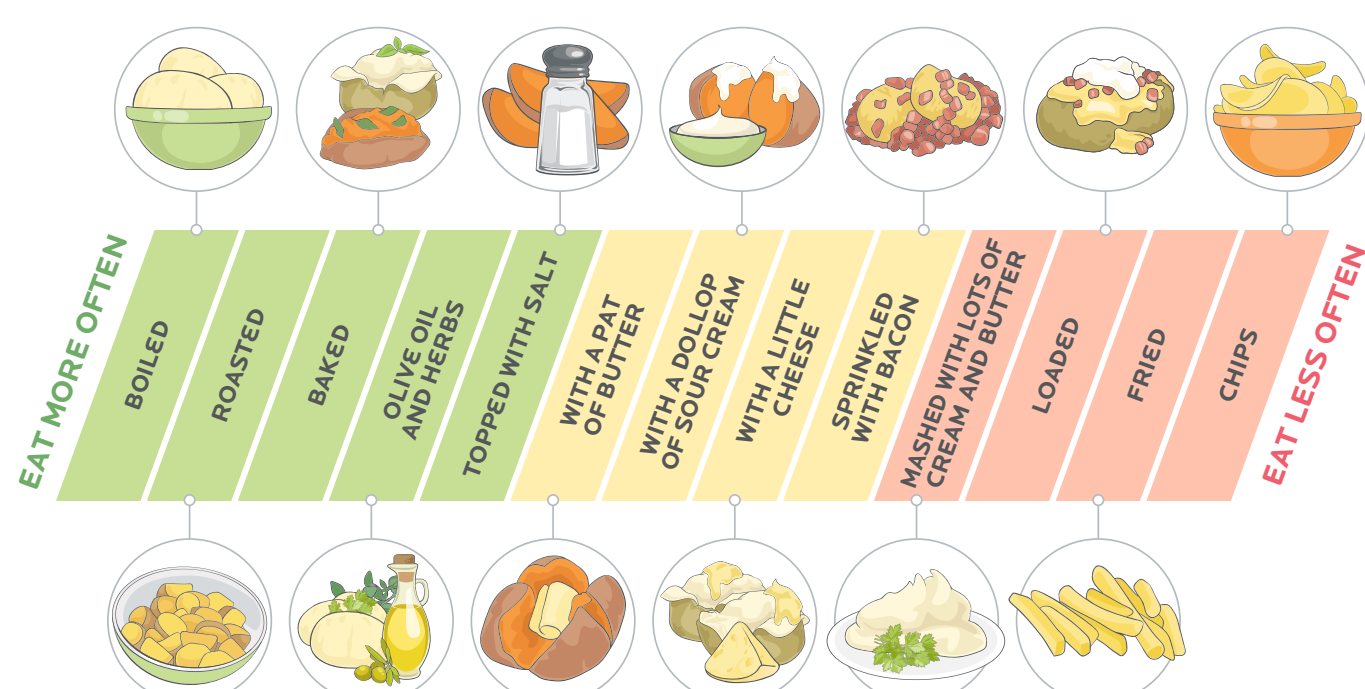
Resistant starch and fiber get fermented in the gut, producing **short-chain fatty acids**.

#### SHORT-CHAIN FATTY ACIDS MAY:

- Keep you fuller longer
- Act as fuel for healthy gut bacteria and mucosal cells
- Inhibit pathogenic bacteria
- Stimulate blood flow to the colon
- Increase mineral absorption and nutrient circulation
- Prevent absorption of toxins
- Decrease inflammation
- Decrease risk of colon cancer

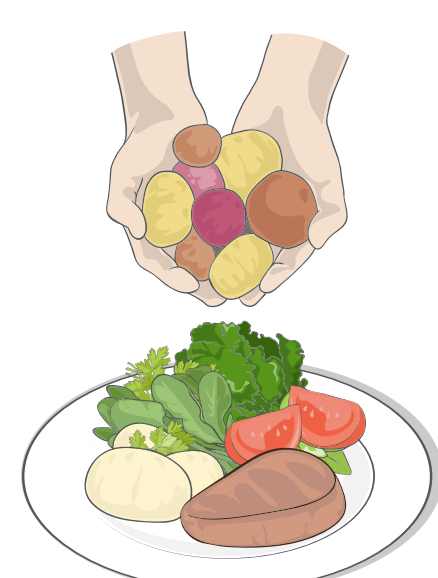
## HOW TO EAT POTATOES AND SWEET POTATOES

Tubers get a bad rap because they're often used for high-calorie dishes. In reality there's a range of ways in which potatoes and sweet potatoes fit into a healthy diet.



## HOW MUCH TO EAT

Start with 1 to 2 cupped handfuls of carb-rich foods per meal. This can be potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, lentils, fruit, or whole grains. Then adjust portion sizes up or down based on:



- Individual goals such as fat loss, mass gain, and fuel for athletic performance
- Body size (smaller people need less; larger people need more)
- Individual carb needs (higher for active, lean people)
- Individual preferences

## BENEFITS OF EATING POTATOES AND SWEET POTATOES

Including potatoes and sweet potatoes in a balanced diet:



- Helps you feel psychologically satisfied and physically satiated
- Ensures that your diet has "carb variety" and keeps colorful food on your plate
- Gives you steady, slow-burn energy
- Helps you get beyond "good foods" vs. "bad foods"
- Helps you achieve health and fitness goals

\*Source for nutrition data: Nutritiondata.self.com