



How to grow potatoes at home

Is there anything more nourishing than a hearty duck fat-roasted potato or loaded potato wedge on a cool autumn's night?

Potato dishes are a staple of the Aussie kitchen, and it doesn't get much more delicious than a potato plucked from your very own garden. Growing delicious fruits and vegetables is an easy skill to master. And growing potatoes at home is especially simple, with this versatile vegetable requiring very little in terms of watering and plant care.

Read on for our simple guide to growing your very own potatoes at home.

How to grow potatoes

In essence, all potatoes need to grow is a sunny patch in your garden or courtyard and consistent watering. In a temperate climate like Australia, potatoes can be grown most months of the year, provided there's no frost around. Better yet, you can actually grow potatoes from other potatoes – provided they have begun to sprout off-white shoots from the swollen spots known as “eyes”. Keep in mind, most store-bought potatoes have been treated with sprout inhibitor (so the tubers don't unleash a sprouting party in your pantry!), so it's best to buy specialty seed potatoes from nurseries or plant stores.

Preparation

You'll need to allow two-three weeks to prepare your seed potatoes before planting.

1. Start by placing them in indirect sunlight in your kitchen, ensuring they remain cool and don't overheat.
2. After a couple of weeks, cut your bigger seed potatoes (those larger than a golf ball) into pieces, making sure each piece has at least one eye (two is best). Small seed potatoes can be left as is.
3. To prevent rotting, allow a few days for the cut potatoes to recover before planting.

Where to plant potatoes

Potatoes will grow beautifully in hilled mounds in your garden but can also be grown in raised beds or wooden boxes. The humble potato will also flourish in a large pot on your balcony, provided the pot is in full sun (receiving at least six hours of sunlight a day), has drainage holes in the bottom and is at least 40-50 cm deep.

If you have sufficient space in your garden, dig shallow trenches about 10-20 cm deep and no more than 40 cm wide. We recommend filling the

bottom of your trench with compost (this will ensure your baby potatoes receive maximum nutrition), before covering with soil. Plant your seed potatoes sprout-side up with about 20-30 cm between each, at a depth of around 10 cm. Cover loosely with soil and water the bed evenly for the next fortnight, aiming for no more than 5 cm of water per week.

Now comes the fun part! You'll see shoots appear after a couple of weeks, a sign your baby taters are well on their way to becoming fully formed potatoes. But to ensure the underground tubers stay buried and don't receive too much sun, you'll need to "hill up" the base of each shoot by scooping a small mound of soil to cover all but the topmost leaves. Expect to do this three or four times over the course of growing your potatoes – a process that should take around two to three months overall.

For those planning on growing potatoes in pots, the same principles apply. Fill your pot about halfway (a mixture of potting mix and compost works best), place your seed potatoes roughly 30 cm apart, then top with about 10-20 cm of organic matter. And don't forget to "hill up" periodically – this step is crucial!

When to harvest potatoes

Have the leaves on your potato shoots started dying? Happy days – it's almost harvest time! Wait a couple of weeks until the top foliage has died away, then gently harvest your potatoes with your fingers or a gardening fork.

We recommend curing your potatoes for a fortnight or so in a cool, dark place if you're planning on storing them. Incredibly, they'll last up to six months in your fridge or pantry this way. Or maybe you're hungry to get cooking, like, now? Then you can skip this step.

Here are four mouth-watering potato recipes from The NEFF Kitchen to get you started.

- [**Loaded Massaman Potato Wedges**](#)



- [Rosemary and garlic smashed potatoes](#)



- [Duck fat potatoes](#)



- [Roast beef with mustard potatoes and jus](#)



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