



## Eat, Learn, Sell – Eating by Example -

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### *Watercress*

AKA: American cress, garden cress, Indian cress, nasturtium, pepper cress, Peruvian cress, and yellow rocket. Traditionally watercress was harvested from clear running streams, found growing in clumps that attached to stones on the bottom. Now, Watercress is grown hydroponically or in beds that are flooded.

A relative of nasturtiums, watercress is a fresh flavor and a bit peppery. Watercress is also a member of the cruciferous family, a cousin of cabbage, kale and mustard.



Cress is a common name for more than a dozen sharply flavored, pungent small-leaved plants. Watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*) is the most well-known of the cresses.

Upland Cress – grows on dry land and has a clover-like leaf. Grown for micro and mini sizes, this has a milder flavor with a lighter pepper accent than traditional watercress. Not to be confused with watercress - Other common names include Normandy Cress, Dryland Cress and Bank Cress.

Garden Cress – Classically of African origin, these broad leaves taste more like horseradish and include varieties including curly, golden, broadleaf and common cress.

Nasturtium – a bright yellow to scarlet flowering plant with broad, lily pad shaped leaves. Both the leaves and the flowers are edible with a peppery flavor.

Hydroponic Watercress is an entirely edible, delicately textured green with lime colored leaflets that generally have three oval shaped lobes. The leaves sprout from thin succulent stems that all connected to a cluster of roots that have been grown in water. The hydro version of cress has a more mild pepper flavor than cress grown in soil or wild foraged.

Watercress is available year around. Without the roots, watercress should have bright green leaves and the stems should be crisp. Watercress is best when it is not too large and the stems are not prominent. Other cresses should have their root ball attached and should be perky with a peppery aroma. Refrigerated storage after harvest is critical and with proper care, watercress can be used within 3-4 days. To prepare – wash, spin and refrigerate in a plastic bag. Store the hydroponic cresses with their root balls.

## Purple Potatoes

Originated in South America, these deeply colored and beautiful potatoes have just recently begun to be accepted by the American consumer. An internal flesh ranging in color from dark blue to lavender distinguishes these tubers. Though, Peruvian in origin, the Purple potato can be used in any cuisine that would have potatoes in a recipe.

Unlike white -fleshed potatoes, Purple potatoes are rich in the antioxidant, *anthocyanin*. This flavonoid is most often found in blue, red and purple produce such as berries and pomegranates. The antioxidant *anthocyanin* has been shown in studies to possess anti-cancer and heart-protective effects, as well as benefits like boosting the immune system and protecting against age-related memory loss. The nutritional value and energy-rich properties of this potato are increasing its popularity with modern consumers. All potatoes are naturally high in potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure.



While all purple potatoes contain anthocyanin, not all purple potatoes are of the same variety. Some of the common names and varieties are: Purple Peruvian (fingerling variety), All Blue, Congo, Lion's Paw, Vitillette, Purple Viking and Purple Majesty. Purple Majesty is known as the deepest purple of all purple varieties, hence the name. Purple potatoes are grown for both fresh market potatoes and for chipping purposes.

Purple potatoes are very similar to the popular Russet potatoes in nutritional value. One-half cup of purple potatoes contains 70 calories, 15 grams of carbohydrates, 1 gram of fiber, 2 grams of protein and no fat. One-half cup of Russet potatoes contains 66 calories, 16 grams of carbohydrates, 1 gram of fiber, 1 gram of protein and no fat. The one significant difference between purple potatoes and Russet potatoes is the antioxidant content; purple potatoes contain 4 times as much antioxidant as Russet potatoes.



Traditionally available in the fall, these potatoes are becoming available year around with a short gap in the winter. Potatoes should be stored in a cool and dark space.

Potato salad: For 2 pounds potatoes, use 4 tablespoons mayonnaise, 3 tablespoons stone-ground or Dijon mustard, 2 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt, and 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar. Serves 6.

Interesting fact: The average American eats an average of 126 lbs. of potatoes each year.