

IDAHO[®] POTATO BAR



Everything You Need To Know For Successful Operation



Potato Bar Toppings

**Baked, Mashed and French Fry
Potato Bar**



The Advantages of “Branding” Your Potato Bar

Use the premium image of Idaho® Potatoes, developed over years of consistently advertising to consumers and marketing to food service, to help your operation establish a successful potato bar program. There is no licensing or franchise fee required to display and sell the very best potatoes. All it requires is your unit’s commitment to specify Idaho® Potatoes only and to feature them on the potato bar.

While using genuine Idaho® Potatoes can cost a few pennies more per potato, the profitability

WE’RE PROUD TO FEATURE
IDAHO®
POTATOES

increases because you can charge more for quality. And, Idaho® Potatoes can help:

- Increase customer satisfaction
- Build food service credibility
- Increase per capita spending and participation

Although forty-four states grow potatoes, only one is so proud of our growers, shippers and processors that the name “Famous Potatoes” appears on the Idaho automobile license plate. Idaho is the #1 best seller with a 30% market share. In a recent Fresh Trends study by the fruit and vegetable magazine The Packer, 82% of consumers preferred Idaho® Potatoes over any other state of origin. It makes smart business sense to use this as a marketing strategy. Put the high consumer recognized equity to work for your operation and brand your potato bar — IDAHO!

Potato Bar Popularity

A 1995 Food Management magazine fax poll showed that 87% of all non-commercial operators used food bars and that potato bars are second only to salad bars in popularity.

Ever since the 1970s, when the stuffed potato and potato bar took off in QSR operations such as Wendys, the potato was promoted from a minor role as a side dish to a full-fledged star. And as this trend has evolved it's been a popular selection for customers. They love the variety, never tiring of the choices and the ability to create their own perfect Idaho® Potato entree. It's an ideal meal replacement for the old fashioned lunch or dinner plate selections typically divided up into entrees, starch and vegetables because it can combine choices together. Potato bars are fun — people pick toppings, but they can also experiment too.

It's a way to try new ingredients or savor old favorites. The three most popular baked potato toppings according to Food Management's survey are:

1. Cheese and broccoli
2. Sour cream and butter
3. Chili

What customers really like is the ability to design their own meals — from low calorie choices to a hearty, delicious, filling, hot entree. Kids love potato bars and the chance to make adult choices. Workers love the everyday variety — just like a trip to the salad bar. People in a hurry love the chance to have a quick, hot meal — whether to eat on-premise or to take out.

A New Twist to Traditional Potato Bars

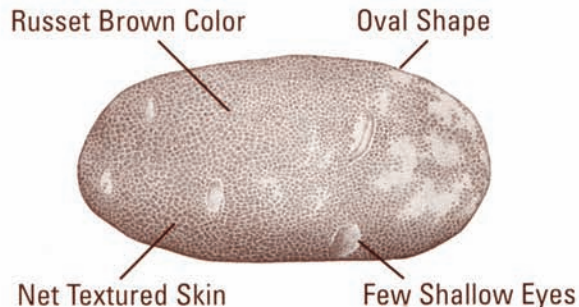
Don't always lock yourself into thinking a potato bar is just baked potatoes. Marriott Management Services first ran a Potato Grand Prix several years ago by setting up a variety of potato styles (baked, French fry or mashed) with dips and toppings. This has proved so popular that they now have locations that run a "French fry" only potato bar. It incorporates the use of straight cut, shoestring fries with skin-on steak-cut wedges and the coated shaped and spicy fries. Dips include ranch dressing and salsa while toppings include brown

gravy, melted cheese sauce, etc. One of the favorites at Charley's Steakery, a commercial chain offering fresh-cut Idaho® French fries is the Fiesta Fry™. Like nachos, the fries are topped with salsa, cheese and sour cream. The mashed potato, with flavorings such as roasted garlic, skin-on with buttermilk, fresh herbs and olive oil can provide a perfect base for hot toppings and sauces. Why not use potato skins to create an afternoon appetizer potato bar?

How to Tell if the Potatoes are Genuine Idaho

Look for the "Grown in Idaho™" state seal on the carton or bag. It guarantees that the potatoes were grown in the state of Idaho — That's Genuine Idaho! Also look for these characteristics →

Operators — be sure to double check your produce invoice. If you ordered Idaho® Potatoes it should say so on the invoice too. "Russets" or "Potatoes" is a giveaway that you didn't get Idaho® Potatoes.



How to Store Idaho® Potatoes Properly

- Select a cool, dark, well-ventilated storage area — the best temperature is 45°-48°F. Don't refrigerate. At temperatures below 42°F, potato starch turns to sugar and produces an uncharacteristic sweet flavor.

- Protect from strong light to keep potatoes from turning green and acquiring a bitter flavor.

How to Bake and Serve Idaho® Potatoes to Perfection

Wash, dry and pierce the skin in a few well-distributed spots with a fork. This allows the steam to escape while cooking. Don't use foil wrap, since it holds in moisture which steams, rather than bakes, the potatoes. Result? Soggy spuds. Foil adds to your labor time and costs money too! Potatoes are fully-cooked when the internal temperature reaches 210°F. For optimum results, bake potatoes in a standard or convection oven.

Here's a handy chart:

TIMES AND TEMPERATURES

	Convection	Conventional
Equipment:	18"x26" tray	18"x26" tray
Potato Count:	80 to 140	80 to 140
Oven Temperature:	375°F	425°F
Time:	45-50 minutes	55-60 minutes

How to Begin

If your operation has a salad bar already, installing a potato bar is an easy transition. Much of the same space and ingredients can work with both. Some salad bar ingredients lend themselves naturally to Idaho® potato bar toppings such as diced tomatoes, shredded cheese, bacon bits, chopped vegetables, etc. Even dressing such as ranch-style or blue cheese fit perfectly.

You'll also need a warming counter display area for the potatoes. For some locations, a portable steamtable insert or a soup warmer works fine. More elaborate potato bars utilize hot and cold sections, but it is easy to experiment with existing equipment to get started. Some units capitalize on the popularity of exhibition cooking for the hot food

toppings and serve the potato to the customer rather than using a self-service line. Don't wrap the Idaho® potato in foil — it steams the potato and loses its unique flavor advantage over ordinary russets.

To keep labor costs low, use existing topping selections at first, then expand to new and different choices. Be sure to consider varying the featured items from week-to-week to make the bar fresh and exciting for your customers.

You'll need to anticipate using the ovens to bake potatoes, especially if done in batches, during the service hours, to set aside part of the cooler for storage of cold ingredients and to use a nearby stove top to finish off sauces.



How to Merchandise It

The success of a potato bar for your operation depends heavily on getting customer trial. Customers won't know what you're offering unless you tell them.

Use outside banners to draw attention to the new bar, distribute flyers to potential customers, and advertise. Whatever method fits your operation, just be sure to get the word out!

Decide on a method for pricing — one rate for a plain potato with butter or sour cream, another for a loaded potato entree might make sense for your location. In the Food Management poll, nearly 28% of operators stated that they charge patrons by the ounce and 90% have self-service bars. Use an easy-to-read price card at the bar to avoid any confusion, and, if possible, have a scale nearby for portion-by-the-ounce pricing. Some operators charge a different price for meat selections.

One excellent method is to post a list of prices for different types of combinations — plain, all “veggie”, meats and cheeses, or unlimited. Be sure to track

your food costs for preparation, divide by the number of plates sold and calculate an average cost so you can adjust pricing up or down if needed.

When you compare Idaho® potatoes to other russet varieties, you may find there's a slight price advantage in buying cheaper per carton potatoes. Don't be fooled! Idaho® potatoes have the flavor and taste customers prefer, the solids that yield a delicious potato time after time. Consistency is what you want to look for first — after all, you want people to rave about your potato bar!

Break the carton cost down to an individual unit size and you'll find you can serve Idaho® potatoes for only a few cents more. When you serve Idaho® potatoes on the potato bar, tell your customers by signage or employee scripting. Let them know you believe in offering the finest quality ingredients available!

Use the Right Utensils

When setting up your Idaho® potato bar, be sure to pay close attention to the details — the right serving utensils can save you money. For example, an expensive item like shredded or grated cheese should have a small spoon rather than a large one. The same principle would apply to serving baby shrimp or diced meats — keep the size of the utensil in mind to avoid automatic over-portioning by your customers.

It's a good idea to draw a map of the potato bar layout. Every time it gets set up, your employees know which crocks, ladles, scoop sizes, etc. are required. Make sure to double check that each ingredient or selection has its own utensil. Keep commonly used spare utensils close by in case one is dropped or soiled.

Instruct your employees on how to change items on the potato bar. With crocks, for example, it speeds up the process to have a backup of the more popular items in the cooler, ready for an exchange. For food safety reasons, always replace the crock with new ingredients, then add the old on top of the new. Rotating this way, the fresh

product is always on the bottom. This is especially important with items such as chopped eggs, dairy- or mayonnaise-based sauces.

Match the size containers to their popularity — i.e., a larger container for a frequently used selection, a smaller container for ingredients that are less popular. Items that may spoil faster typically go in smaller crocks and should be iced or refrigerated. Don't overfill the crocks — they can't stay cold if above the refrigeration line.

Stuffed baked potatoes can be served on a plate, bowl or casserole dish, but regardless of the type used, make sure it is large enough to hold the potato and the toppings. With the increasing popularity of takeout, have china and paper or plastic containers available along with plastic forks and napkins to make that sale on or off premise.



Set Up in the Right Place

It's important to merchandise the availability of an Idaho® Potato Bar to your customers. Hide it in a corner and you won't get the volume of usage you need to offset having lots of choices or keeping ingredients fresh.

Usually at the entrance or adjacent to the cash register are the best choices for placement of the bar. If you're building a potato bar, cart or kiosk from scratch, be sure to allow for drainage for each cleaning and maintenance, adequate lighting to show off all the ingredients properly, and a sneeze guard to comply with sanitary rules or guidelines. Check with the local health inspector on the requirements ahead of time.

Often the equipment is already in place. In this example, your challenge is to make the display area attractive and inviting. Use signage to direct customers to its location. If potatoes are to be "made to order", use the display to show off examples of the finished choices. Sampling a new topping helped Levy Restaurants operation in the Gallery Cafe increase the sales of barbecue chicken in a tomato sauce which became a top choice in popularity.

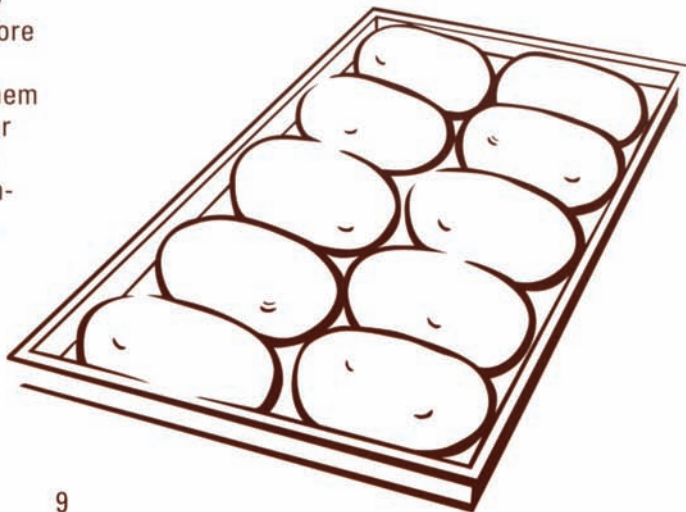
Production Considerations

Use containers that can be easily replaced, removed and cleaned. Consider using a two-sided approach to the potato bar so employees can replace items without interrupting customer traffic flow. This becomes harder to do if you have a one-sided bar against a wall.

Do as much advance preparation as feasible without compromising the freshness of the ingredients. Chop or use precut vegetables, cook any sauces or meat toppings, grate cheeses, and store in covered large containers.

Bake the potatoes ahead of time, but cook them in batches to insure the best product. Remember to put Idaho® potatoes in a single layer on sheet pans to bake — stacking them will cause browning on the bottom layers before the top is done.

Assign an employee for each shift to replenish the potato bar ingredients, making sure everything is restocked before depleted. They should be aware of the need to keep fresh, hot potatoes on display, to clean around the containers so the bar stays attractive and has a nice appearance. Maintain an extra supply of plates, napkins, plastic ware or silver so that no item runs low or is out.



Nutrition

Potatoes are healthful, satisfying foods. Merchandise this nutrition message to health- or diet-conscious patrons to stimulate potato bar sales.

A nutritionally balanced diet should contain more carbohydrate foods, and less protein and fat than the average American currently eats. Nutritional and medical research indicates that a diet tilted in favor of complex carbohydrate foods has disease prevention properties.

All foods provide energy, but complex carbohydrate foods such as potatoes are more easily and evenly digested than simple sugars, proteins or fats. This is especially important for physically active people. Complex carbohydrates are packed with vitamins and minerals and are low in sodium. The current nutritional goal is to reduce our sodium intake in our daily diets. Give the consumer

a choice of foods relatively low in sodium.

Health-conscious Americans are adding more fiber to their daily diets and potatoes can add to the overall fiber intake. Properly-planned vegetarian diets, because of their low-fat, high-fiber content, have numerous health benefits. Even if you don't give up meat or other proteins, eating more plant-based foods will increase the fiber in your diet and reduce total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol.

Respond to the needs of your customer. Fat and cholesterol are both concerns today. Add a choice of low-calorie toppings for the health-conscious. Offer margarine, non-fat plain yogurt, low-calorie or skim milk cheese, chicken and turkey at your Idaho® potato bar.

Potato Nutrition Facts

GENUINE IDAHO® POTATOES

Potatoes are fat-free, cholesterol-free, saturated fat-free, and sodium-free foods. Potatoes are high in Vitamin C and potassium and a good source of Vitamin B₆ and dietary fiber.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size 1 potato (148g/5.5oz)

Amount per serving		
Calories 120		Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*		
Total Fat	0g	0%
Saturated Fat	0g	0%
Cholesterol	0mg	0%
Sodium	5mg	0%
Potassium	680mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate	27g	9%
Dietary Fiber	2g	9%
Sugars	3g	
Protein	3g	



Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C	40%
Calcium	2%	Iron	6%
Thiamin	8%	Riboflavin	2%
Niacin	8%	Vitamin B ₆	10%
Folate	6%	Phosphorous	6%
Magnesium	6%	Zinc	2%
Copper	4%		

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat. Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Potassium	3,500mg	3,500mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary fiber	25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Nutrition label format as of May 1994

Topping Examples

On pages that follow are some suggested formats for Idaho® potato bars that work. These include a school system baked potato and broccoli bar, a fiesta bar, an all-veggie selection, and a “healthy choices” potato bar. What you put on your bar is unlimited — just look around the kitchen and be sure to include selections you may already have in stock. To get you started, here’s some more popular topping examples:

Vegetables

mushrooms
onions
diced tomatoes
chives
broccoli
cauliflower
green beans
carrots
olives
corn
peppers

Dairy

blue cheese
grated cheese
butter
sour cream
cottage cheese
yogurt
Parmesan

Meat

bacon bits
diced ham
taco meat
chicken
shrimp

Miscellaneous

nuts
croutons
Chinese noodles

Sauces/Dips

chili
BBQ
pizza
seafood
guacamole
melted cheese
ranch dressing
salsa



Potato Bar for Healthy and Nutritious Choices



**SERVICE
UTENSILS**

TONGS

LADLE
SPOON
LADLE

SPOON
SPOON

TONGS
SLOTTED SPOON

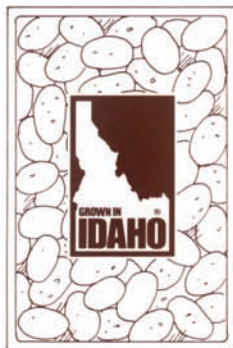
TONGS
SPOON

TONGS
TONGS

TONGS
SPOON

SPOON
SPOON
SPOON

Veggie Potato Bar



IDAHO BAKED
POTATOES



RANCH
DRESSING



LEMON
WEDGES



SOUR CREAM
WITH CHIVES



PLAIN
YOGURT



WHIPPED
BUTTER



COTTAGE
CHEESE



GRATED
CHEESE



MUSHROOMS



DICED
TOMATOES



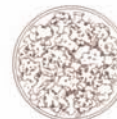
BLACK
OLIVES



GREEN
ONIONS



CAULIFLOWER



BROCCOLI



SHREDDED
CARROTS



CHIVES



SUNFLOWER
SEEDS



BACON
BITS

**SERVICE
UTENSILS**

TONGS

LADLE
LADLE
SPOON

TONGS
LADLE
SPOON

SPOON
SLOTTED SPOON

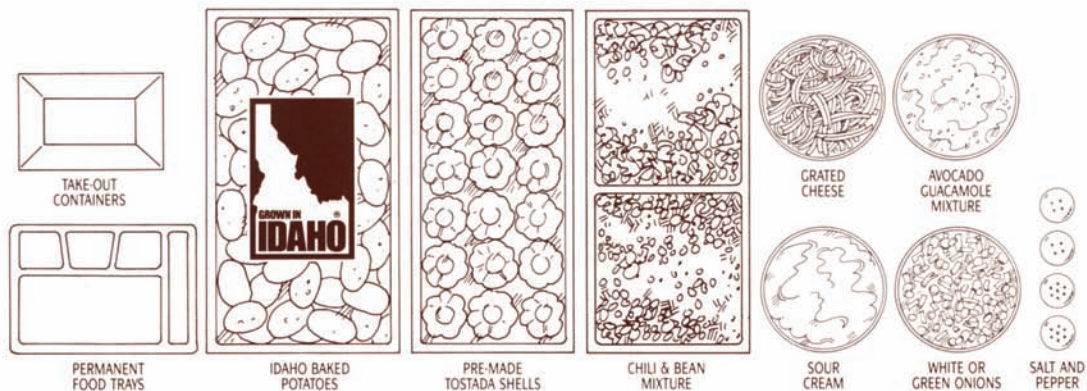
SPOON
SPOON

SPOON
TONGS

TONGS
TONGS

SPOON
SPOON
SPOON

Combination Bar: Baked Potato and Tostadas



**SERVICE
UTENSILS**

TONGS

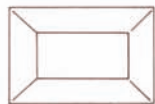
LARGE SPOON

LADLE

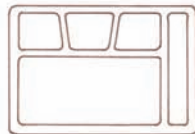
SPOON/
LADLE

LADLE/
SPOON

School System Potato and Broccoli Bar



TAKE-OUT
CONTAINERS



PERMANENT
FOOD TRAYS



IDAHO BAKED
POTATOES



STEAMED
BROCCOLI



SOUR CREAM



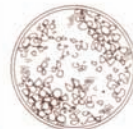
WHIPPED
BUTTER



CHEESE SAUCE OR
GRATED CHEESE



DICED HAM



BACON
BITS



SALT AND
PEPPER

**SERVICE
UTENSILS**

TONGS

TONGS

LADLE/
SPOON

LADLE OR
SPOON

SPOON





Idaho Potato Commission P.O. Box 1068, Boise, Idaho 83701 208-334-2350