

# A Recipe to Grow, Play & Learn

## Tastes & Textures

This resource provides activities for learning, linked to healthy recipes that introduce new tastes, textures and flavours for Early Years children.

### This resource includes:

Growing Potatoes, Spring Onions & Parsley	Physical Development: Fine Motor Skills; Understanding the World: The Natural World
Potato Printing & What Food Comes From Animals?	Personal, Social & Emotional Development: Building Relationships; Understanding the World: The Natural World; Arts & Design: Creating with Materials / Being Imaginative & Expressive
Food Refusal, Fussy Eating & Tastes & Textures!	Communication & Language: Speaking; Personal, Social & Emotional Development: Managing Self; Understanding the World: The Natural World
Recipes for Tastes & Textures: Leek & Potato Soup Potato Cakes Pea & Potato Tortilla	Physical Development: Fine Motor Skills; Understanding the World: The Natural World

## Literacy Links



### **The Enormous Potato**

by Aubrey Davis

### **One Potato, Two Potato**

by Adam & Charlotte Guillain

### **SuperTato**

by Sue Hendra & Paul Linnet

### **Potato Pants!**

by Laurie Keller



# Grow Your Own Potatoes


The recipes within this resource contain several easy to grow vegetables such as potatoes, spring onions and parsley. There are lots of exciting and fun activities you can get involved with in your setting!

Watch this film: [Harvesting Potatoes](#), from 'Bee Bright: Out and About on the Farm: Incredible Crops!'



Have a go at growing potatoes – they can be grown in the ground, a raised bed or even a bag. You don't need lots of space! Potatoes can be planted in the spring and harvested from early summer through to the autumn, depending upon whether you plant a first early, second early or main crop variety.

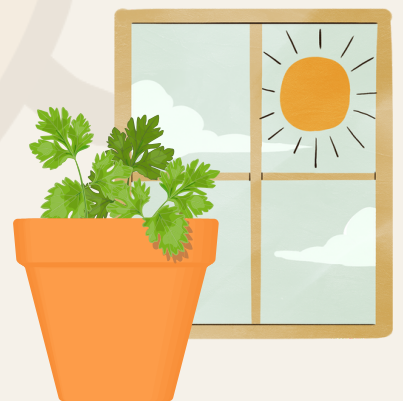
## Top Tips!



When your potatoes are ready, tip the bag upside down and count how many you have!



Parsley is a fast grower, have a go at growing it in pots on the windowsill!



Have a go at planting spring onions in a trough and watch them grow from your window!



Spring onions grow really quickly and can be harvested in as little as 10 weeks!

# Potato

Vegetable



# Potato

Suggested varieties: *Colleen, Orla (early); Golden Wonder, Cara (maincrop)*

Vegetable

**PLANT**



Buy disease-free 'seed' potatoes. Plant 15cm deep. Space 'earlies' 30x50cm apart after six weeks in a cool light place to grow shoots ('chitting'). Plant 'maincrops' at 35x70cm

**GROW**



Protect shoots from frost with horticultural fleece. Pull soil around stems ('earth-up') when 15cm tall (leave top leaves showing). Water if dry. Mulch to conserve moisture

**EAT**



Carefully dig up earlies as needed once plants flower; maincrops three weeks after leaves yellow (leave tubers to dry for two hours before storing). Remove all tubers

## Growing guide

Give it a go...

Average time to harvest  
10 weeks (early); 20 (maincrop)

Equipment needed  
Horticultural fleece; mulch

Germination time  
Seed potatoes sprout in two weeks

Average plant size  
70cm tall and wide

Family group to grow with  
*Solanaceae: aubergine, tomato*

Seed saving group  
5 - Specialist or not applicable

Key nutritional content  
Vitamin C

Spring Term			Summer Term				Autumn/Winter Term				
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

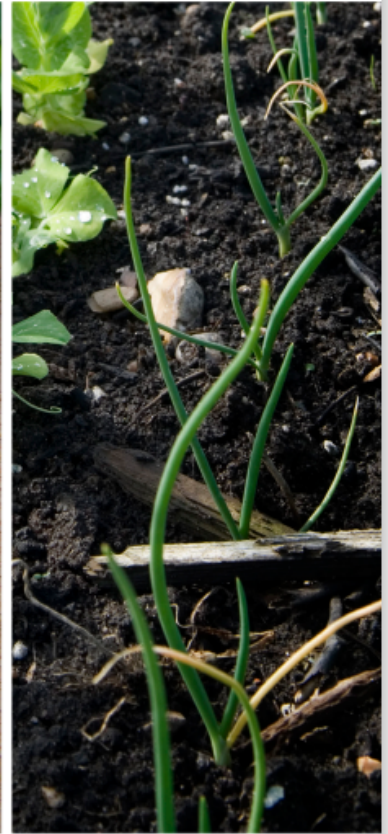
■ Sow indoors   
 ■ Sow outdoors   
 ■ Plant out/transplant   
 ■ Harvest   
 Use cloche

2.5cm = 1 inch    30 cm = 1 foot

[www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

# Onion, Salad

Vegetable



# Onion, Salad

Suggested varieties: *Crimson Forest, De Rebouillon, White Lisbon*

Vegetable

**PLANT**



Regularly sow seed 0.5cm deep in rows 10cm apart. Thin seedlings if needed to 2.5-5cm. Remove thinnings so not to attract 'onion root fly'

**GROW**



Weeds easily damage plants so carefully remove by hand. Water plants in dry weather for steady growth. Break off any flower stems that appear

**EAT**



Gently lift bulbs when 1-2cm across and the leaves are still green. Loosen with a hand fork if needed. Sowing regularly will give a succession of harvests

## Growing guide

Easy!

## Average time to harvest

10-12 weeks

## Equipment needed

None

## Germination time

21 days

## Average plant size

20cm tall, 5cm wide

## Family group to grow with

Alliaceae: garlic, shallot

## Seed saving group

2 - Annual, can cross-pollinate

## Key nutritional content

Folate, vitamin C, iron, vit. A

Spring Term			Summer Term				Autumn/Winter Term				
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

■ Sow indoors   
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 Use cloche

2.5cm = 1 inch    30 cm = 1 foot



# Parsley

Herbs



# Parsley

Suggested species: *Petroselinum crispum* (botanical name)

Herbs

**PLANT** Sow seed 0.1cm deep in pots. Transplant seedlings when 5-10cm tall to 15cm apart in rows or larger pots. Choose deep fertile soil in sun or partial shade

**GROW** Protect from slugs. Keep well watered in dry weather and feed regularly with an organic fertiliser. Remove any flower heads that appear

**EAT** Pick leaves in the plant's first year before flowering; use fresh or freeze. Extend harvest by covering with horticultural fleece in autumn

**Growing guide**  
Give it a go...

**Average growing period**  
From 10 weeks

**Equipment needed**  
Feed, horticultural fleece

**Germination time**  
14-28 days

**Average plant size**  
40cm tall, 30cm wide

**Family group to grow with**  
Apiaceae: coriander, dill

**Seed saving group**  
4 - Biennial, needs isolation

**Key nutritional content**  
Fresh: calcium, vit.A, vit. C, iron, folate

Spring Term			Summer Term				Autumn/Winter Term				
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
									🏠🏠		

■ Sow indoors   
 ■ Sow outdoors   
 ■ Plant out/transplant   
 ■ Harvest   
 🏠 Use cloche

# Potato Printing

**Have a go at creating some potato prints. It's lots of fun!**

This is a great activity that allows children to improve their fine motor skills whilst using a food item to complete an art activity.



Try using a biscuit/cookie cutter to make some fun shapes

Can you make a rainbow out of potato prints to display on the wall?



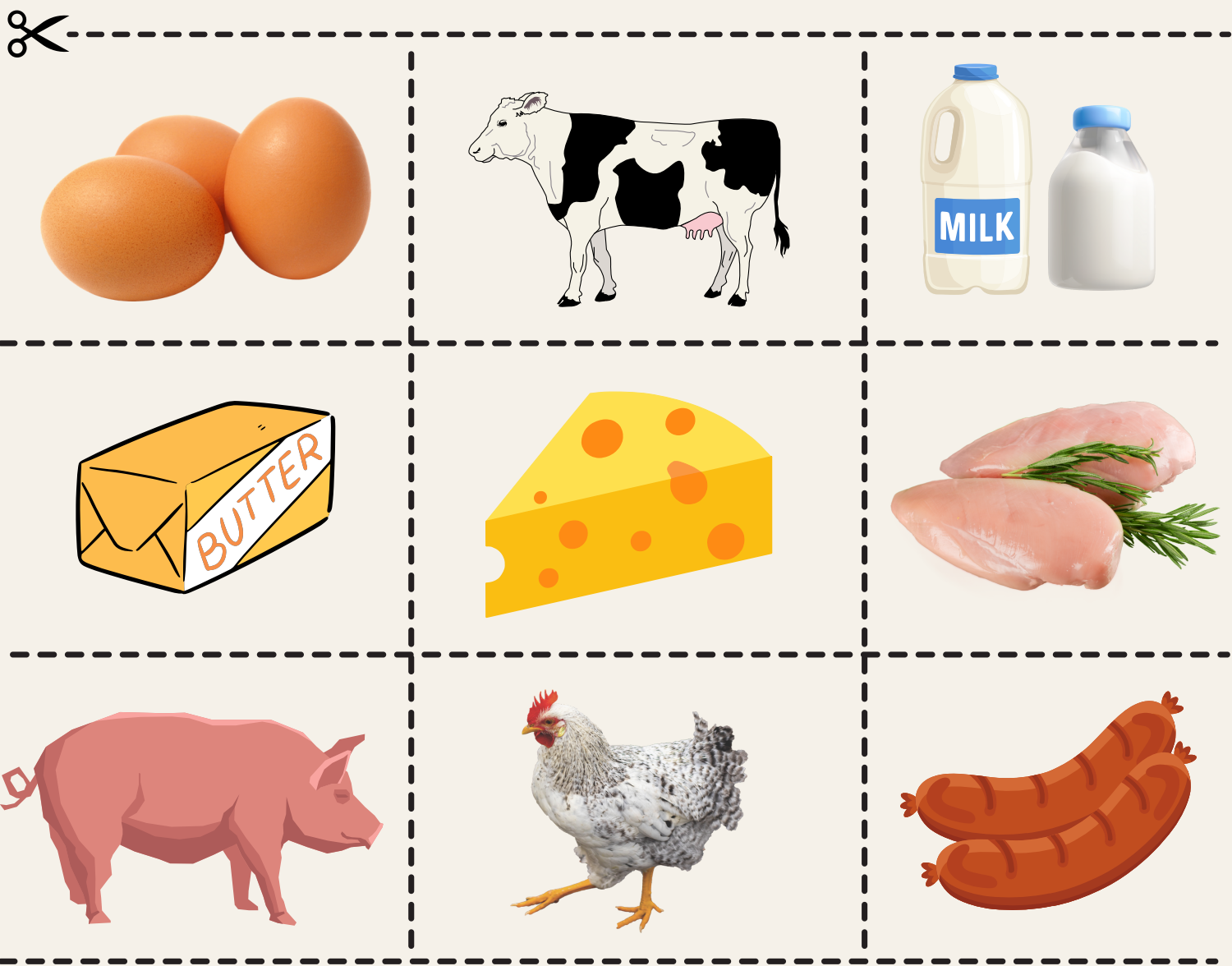
Potato printing is a great way to teach maths through counting!



# What Food Comes From Animals?

It is important for children to know where food comes from. The recipes in this resource contain a number of foods that come from animals.

Cut up the cards and ask the children to match the food to the animal OR get the children to draw a line from the animal to the food they produce.



**WORD  
BANK**

egg

sausage

cheese

pig

cow

chicken

milk

butter

# Fussy Eating & Food Refusal

Food Refusal is the refusal of new or previously liked food. It's a basic fear response and a normal part of a child's development which most children go through, tending to peak at two years old.

Children show fear by refusing to taste new foods that look 'different'. This might be a food that has a colour, shape or texture that they are not familiar with.

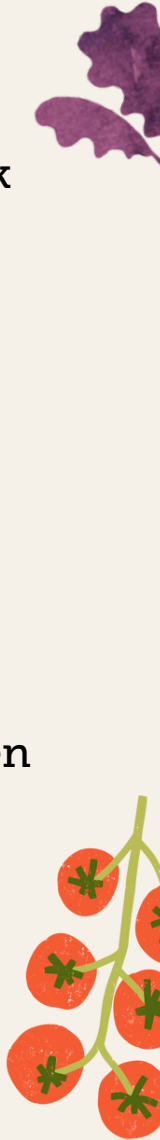
As children become more aware of the sensory properties of foods, they also begin to scrutinise all foods that are given to them. They might refuse previously liked foods if they don't fit their newly formed criteria for 'safe' foods. Bitter tastes are often disliked and since many vegetables are bitter tasting, children predictably tend to refuse them.

## **Fussy eating can look like:**

- Saying they don't like the food
- Pushing the food away on their plates
- Crying if attempts are made to make them eat a small bite

## **Encourage children to eat different foods by:**


- Offering a variety of foods
- Making meals colourful and interesting
- Letting children experiment with food through touch, taste and smell
- Being a good role model at mealtimes, e.g. using positive body language and wording
- Staying neutral about food e.g. don't refer to foods as 'good' or 'bad'






# Fussy Eating & Food Refusal:

## Top Tips!



It can take a child 8 - 12 times to accept a new food. Repetition is key: keep offering but never force.






If introducing a new food, e.g. beans or lentils, start with a smooth, blended consistency and build up to a slightly lumpier texture, finishing with the whole food.



Separating food on a plate is ok! Sometimes children need to get familiar with certain foods before mixing them together.



Offer a 'help yourself' policy for fruit, veg & salad.



Ultra-processed foods like wafers, crisps, biscuits and cakes from a packet can have a negative effect on speech development due to the 'sucking' motion rather than chewing. The mouth does not use the muscles it should when eating these foods, so try to avoid them.

# Leek & Potato Soup

Serves 4

## Ingredients (allergens in bold)

4 x large potatoes, peeled and chopped  
3 leeks washed and chopped (frozen or fresh leeks work well)

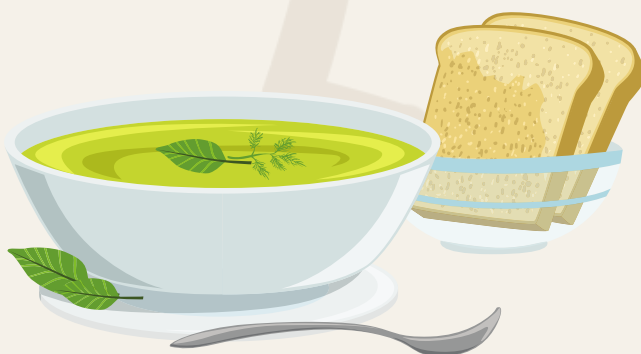
**1 x veg stock cube (dissolved in 500ml boiling water)**

Salt and pepper

1 tbsp veg oil

## Method

1. Put the leeks, potatoes and olive oil in the saucepan and cook slowly, stirring, until the leeks are soft but not brown.
2. Add the vegetable stock.
3. Bring to the boil then continue to cook over a medium heat for about 20 minutes until the potatoes have softened.
4. Use a hand blender to whizz to a thick purée or mash with a potato masher until blended.
5. Season the soup to taste and thin it down with more boiling water if needed.
6. Serve with wholemeal bread
7. Enjoy!



## Equipment

- chopping board
- sharp knife
- wooden spoon
- measuring jug
- medium-sized saucepan
- hand blender or potato masher

## Top Tips!

- Look for reduced salt stock cubes or powders.
- Canned potatoes can be used
- Frozen leeks work well too!
- For an extra portion of veg, add fresh or frozen spinach or celery
- You can add grated cheese to this recipe which adds calcium and gives a rich creamy flavour

# Mini Potato Cakes

Makes approx. 9-12 small cakes

## Ingredients (allergens in bold)

2 x cooked baked potatoes (scoop out the middle)

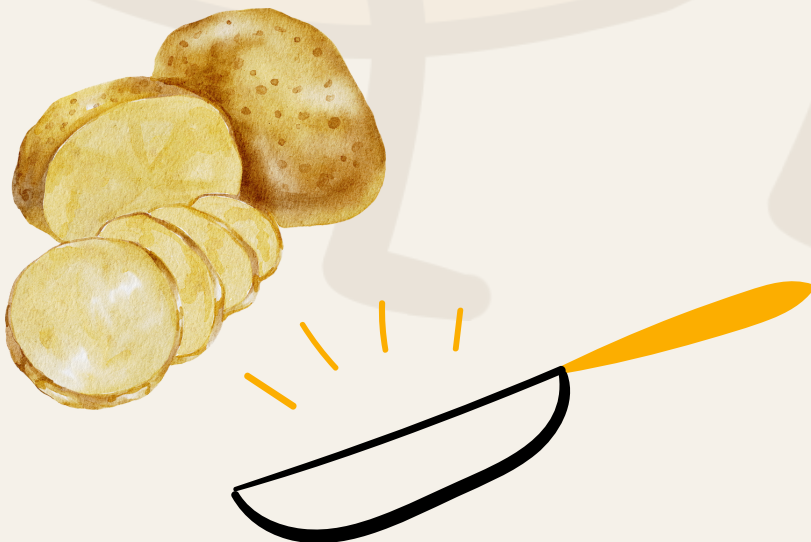
2 x spring onion finely chopped

## Grated cheese

Olive oil

## Method

1. Scoop out the middle of the cooked potato and put in a bowl
2. Mash the potato to soft consistency
3. Add in the finely chopped spring onion
4. Grate in a handful of cheese
5. Mix the ingredients together in the bowl
6. Make into small bite size patties
7. Fry in a tablespoon of olive or until golden brown on each side
8. Leave to cool
9. Let your little one pick these up with their fingers
10. Enjoy!



## Equipment

- potato masher
- frying pan
- knife
- cheese grater
- mixing bowl
- tablespoon
- chopping board

## Top Tips!

- Include a variety of veggies to your mixture such as sweetcorn, peas, tuna, onion or spinach
- These potato cakes can be cooked in the oven or airfryer!
- Make a big batch of these potato cakes and freeze them so you can use as and when you need them.

# Pea & Potato Tortilla

Serves 12

## Ingredients (allergens in bold)

- **12 free range eggs**
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 6 spring onions, cleaned and finely sliced
- 200g fresh or frozen peas
- 6 small potatoes, boiled whole and sliced
- **Grated cheese (for garnish, optional)**

## Method

1. Beat the eggs with the parsley in a bowl.
2. Heat the oil in a frying pan.
3. Fry the spring onions until soft, but not brown.
4. Add the peas and potato to the bowl and mix well into the egg mixture.
5. Add the mixture to the frying pan and cook for 5 mins.
6. Sprinkle the grated cheese on top
7. Place the pan under a hot grill to cook the top of the tortilla.
8. Cut into approx. 12 portions.
9. Serve with salad, crudities or homemade coleslaw.



## Equipment

- mixing bowls
- frying pan
- fork
- chopping board
- sharp knife
- tablespoon
- quiche tin
- spatula

## Top Tips!

- This recipe can be made directly in a quiche tin and cooked in the oven for approx. 15 – 20 mins at 180°C.
- Spring onions do not need to be cooked first as making in the oven softens these.
- Add in lots of seasonal vegetables such as spinach, broad beans, peppers, onions, mushrooms.
- Tinned cooked potatoes work well in this recipe.