Whether or not you consider potatoes a staple goes back to your roots. Growing up, it just wasn’t a meal without potatoes on the table. Even though I have ventured out and eat potatoes less often, my pantry seems incomplete without potatoes in it.

The potato is not really a root but rather a tuber, the end of the plant’s underground stem that swells with stored starch and water. Potatoes are distinguished as one of few plants whose only edible part grows underground. As a member of the nightshade family, the potato plant’s leaves and stems are inedible. After harvest, tubers exposed to too much natural or artificial light causes a green cast to develop on their skins. Deeply peeling the green part away can salvage greened potatoes but if they taste strongly bitter, it’s best to throw them out.

There are seven potato categories: russet, red, white, yellow, blue or purple, fingerling and petite. Russets and blue potatoes are starchy types which produce a dry, fluffy texture when cooked. These work well for baking, mashing and frying. Waxy types—red, yellow and fingerlings—are low starch potatoes holding their shape when boiled and roasted.

Our featured food this month is the fingerling potato. These oblong-shaped tubers are mature potatoes—not “new potatoes”—even though they are only 2 to 4 inches in length. They come in a variety of skin and flesh colors. Being thin skinned, fingerlings look like they should be refrigerated but resist the temptation. Just like other potatoes, they keep best when stored in a cool dark place, away from onions, and with good air circulation. If your storage space is not totally dark, store them in an open-top paper bag. Fingerlings cook faster than round or starchy potatoes, usually in less than 25 minutes.

Pan frying or roasting develops their earthy robust flavor, a stand out if you’re a potato lover like me.

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**Roasted Fingerling Potatoes**

*Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services.*

Serves 4-6.

- 1 ½ pounds fingerling potatoes
- 1 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- ¼ teaspoon dried mustard
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon coarse ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Prepare rimmed baking sheet by coating with cooking spray or lining with silicon mat or parchment paper.

Wash potatoes. Cut them in half lengthwise. Place in large bowl. Toss with olive oil and spices until potatoes are evenly coated. Arrange on prepared baking sheet, cut sides down.

Place in hot oven. Roast for 10 minutes; remove pan from oven and shake the tray to loosen the potatoes. Return to the oven for an additional 10 to 15 minutes until nicely golden brown. Remove from oven, taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.

Try Roasted Fingerling Potatoes for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on December 4.