

Suubira discovers a goldmine in adding value to Irish potatoes

Adding value to Irish potatoes has improved the livelihood of Prisca Suubira who is a single mother, writes **FRED MUZAALA**.

Irish potatoes are among the foods that are occasionally eaten by people. It is either boiled or fried into chips.

Chips, however, have a short shelf period; hence people who make them sometimes incur losses when they do not sell out on that particular day.

However, Prisca Suubira Mbabazi, a resident of Kitete in Mukono town, Mukono District, has found gold in making crisps from Irish potatoes.

She says at first she was making chips from Irish potatoes but later learnt that she could earn more by making crisps.

Four years ago, she switched to making crisps after she got training from a friend who lives in Kampala on how to make crisps.

The journey

"I realised that there was a ready market for crisps in supermarkets in Mukono, Lugazi and Kireka Towns so I was sure my produce would be bought," she says.

She turned one of the rooms in her rented three-room house into a production unit.

This, she says, makes her earn more from the potatoes because her produce does not get bad in a short time like the chips.

Starting

For a start, she bought Irish potatoes worth Shs20,000 and two litres of cooking oil.

Suubira says after selling crisps, that she got a profit of Shs15,000.

The profits, Suubira says, were re-ploughed back into the business and she decided to buy a full bag of Irish potatoes so that she could get more profits.



Suubira fries the crisps at her home in Mukono. Below is the crisps sliced by Suubira. PHOTOS BY FRED MUZAALA.

SHS 8M

THE FROM HER SAVINGS SHE HAS USED TO BUY LAND AND START POTATO FARM

PROCESS OF MAKING CRISPS

- The Irish potatoes are cleaned with water and then peeled.
- They are then sliced into pieces and then fried.
- When ready, they are packed in polythene bags.



Expansion

She bought a bag at Shs90,000, although the price for a bag has since increased to between Shs140,000 and Shs160,000, depending on their supply on the market. She buys the Irish potatoes from produce traders in Mukono.

Currently, Suubira says she fries one bag of Irish every week and uses about eight litres of cooking oil. Each litre of cooking oil costs Shs6,000.

"From one bag every week, I get a profit of Shs90,000, so in a month, I earn Shs360,000," she says.

Compared to when she was making chips, Suubira says in a week she used to earn a profit of Shs20,000 from chips.

She employs one worker, who helps her with some of the work, such as slicing and frying.

Market

Suubira says after packing her produce she uses a bodaboda or taxi to transport them to the supermarkets.

She adds that she makes two packs of crisps, one for Shs1,000 and another Shs2,000. She is paid cash on delivery to the supermarkets, she says.

Achievements

Suubira says she uses proceeds from her enterprise to pay school fees for her children and to sometimes supplement her husband's rent payments.

Also, she has used some of the proceeds to buy a plot of land at Shs8m on which they plan to construct a home next year.

Challenges

Suubira's biggest challenge is lack of transport facilities for her produce to the market. She says because she uses bodabodas and public means, some of her produce get spoilt while in transit. This leads to losses.

Additionally, the ever increasing prices of Irish potatoes and cooking oil also cuts on her profit margin.

She also notes that she lacks space where to do her work but says she plans to construct a temporary structure using profits from her enterprise.

However, in future she plans to increase on the amount she makes a week to at least two bags. This would consequently increase her profits.