

Potatoes

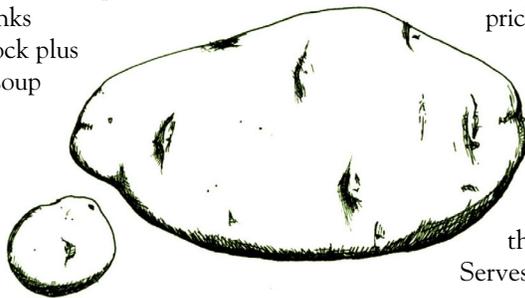
“People like potatoes,” Farmer John’s mom used to say. A plain baked potato will please even the most finicky child or conscientious dieter, while more elaborate creations delight gourmets worldwide.

Potato, Onion, and Roquefort Soup

This soup is not quite for dieters—it will dazzle you with its rich, deep flavors. It’s very filling, so if you’re serving it as a first course, a small cup is plenty. If you’re not a fan of Roquefort cheese, you can substitute Gruyère. *Angelic Organics Kitchen.*

Serves 4 to 6

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic (about 2 cloves)
- 3 medium boiling potatoes (about 1 1/2 pounds), peeled, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock plus more if needed to thin the soup
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1/3 cup cream
- 1/2 cup crumbled Roquefort cheese plus more to taste
- salt
- freshly ground white pepper



1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onions; cook, stirring, until the onions are limp but not brown, about 15 minutes. Add the garlic; cook for 30 seconds more.
2. Add the potatoes and stir until well coated with butter; cook for 5 minutes, stirring them up a few times.
3. Add 2 cups stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool.
4. Add the half-and-half and the cream; gently reheat the soup, but do not boil. Stir in 1/2 cup Roquefort cheese.
5. Transfer the soup to a blender or food processor in batches and purée until smooth. Thin with additional stock if necessary. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with additional cheese if desired and serve hot or cold.

Overheard

Today we dug more potatoes and I felt melancholy for most of the day. I played some Irish airs on my fiddle at lunch and took a nap on some burlap sacks and when I woke up it was quiet and the wind was blowing through the trees and I imagined having a baby right there without anyone knowing it and then going back to work.

STORAGE

Keep unwashed potatoes in a cool, dark, dry place, such as a loosely closed paper bag in a cupboard. They will keep for weeks at room temperature, longer if you can provide their ideal temperature of 40 to 50 degrees. Beware: the low temperature of your refrigerator will convert the starch to sugars. However, new potatoes—which are young and thin-skinned—can be refrigerated if you don’t plan to eat them within a few days. Moisture causes potatoes to spoil, light turns them green, and proximity to onions causes them to sprout. (You can still use a potato that has sprouted, however; simply cut off the “eyes” before use.)

HANDLING

Scrub potatoes well and cut off any sprouts or green skin. (Clean delicate new potatoes gently.) Peeling is a matter of preference. Cut potatoes according to your recipe. If baking a whole potato, be sure to prick the skin in at least two places to allow steam to escape.

Colcannon

You’ll find this classic dish on the menu at any real Irish restaurant. It’s a recipe that takes two staples of the island, potatoes and kale (or sometimes cabbage), and transforms them into a dish truly worthy of the word classic. *Angelic Organics Kitchen.*

Serves 6

- 1 1/2 pounds medium boiling potatoes (about 3 medium potatoes)
 - 2 teaspoons salt, divided, plus more to taste
 - 1 1/2–2 pounds kale (15–20 large leaves)
 - 1 cup chopped leeks or scallions
 - 1 cup half-and-half or milk
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 1/2 cup butter, melted
1. Put the whole potatoes in a large pot, cover with water, and bring to boil. Add 1 teaspoon of the salt and boil until the potatoes are tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes and mash. Put in a heatproof dish and keep warm in a 200°F oven.
 2. Meanwhile, put the kale in a pot, cover with water, and bring to boil. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon salt and cook until the kale is tender, 15 to 20 minutes. (There you go Mrs. Nesbit, it’s in the directions. Don’t worry, everyone will do it this way now that it’s spelled out exactly.) Drain and finely chop the kale.
 3. Place the leeks or scallions in a small pot, cover with the half-and-half, and cook over low heat until very soft, 15 to 20 minutes.
 4. Add the kale to the warm potatoes and mix well. Add the half-and-half with leeks or scallions. Add pepper; season with salt.
 5. Spoon a little of the melted butter over each serving and serve hot.

Excerpted from *Farmer John’s Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook.

