Potatoes

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Veggie Feature: Potatoes

Article by Jillian Fox

It’s official – fall has arrived. Yippee!!! You’ll have to excuse my juvenile exclamations of joy, but I absolutely love fall in Cache Valley. I’m from a small town in Wyoming where spring doesn’t exist and fall consists of a milder version of winter, usually just meaning there is a little less snow on the ground than at Christmas. So you can only imagine my excitement my first semester at Utah State when I discovered the wonders of fall – the leaves, the crisp autumn air, the cinnamon and nutmeg wafting from the kitchen, etc., etc., etc. Last year I had the pleasure of working in my grandparents’ garden, and I learned to love new things about fall – finally getting to roast that acorn squash you have been patiently waiting for all summer, enjoying a perfectly sweet yet tart apple just after the first frost, and digging up the hilled potatoes to discover how many little gems one shriveled “eye” can produce. In the farm’s case, we have tons of these so called gems that we have been waiting to harvest all summer long. So, without further ado, we are happy to bring you… potatoes!

Baked Potatoes

This is kind of cheating. Normally I wouldn’t even think about suggesting the use of a microwave. Generally I think they are a good way to ruin good food. But in this case, it works, especially in a time crunch. I didn’t even know you could do this until this past spring….so maybe there is someone else out there who doesn’t know it either.

Potatoes - as many as you want or need for dinner
Olive oil
Coarse sea salt

Preheat oven to 375°F. Arrange the potatoes in a small baking dish that can be microwaved. Poke the potatoes with a fork. Microwave for 3-4 minutes. Rub the potatoes with olive oil (careful, they are very warm) and salt, pressing the salt in a little bit so it sticks. Bake until a fork can easily be inserted into the potatoes, 10-15 minutes.

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Butternut Squash and Cider Soup

Adapted loosely from “The Essential New York Times Cook Book”

1 shallot, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ c water
3 c peeled, cubed butternut squash
½ c chicken broth
¼ c apple cider
¼ c Greek yogurt
½ t salt
½ Granny Smith apple, small dice
Cracked black pepper
A splash of cream

In a medium saucepan, combine shallot, garlic, and water. Cook until vegetables soften, 3-5 minutes. Add broth and squash and simmer over medium with lid on until soft, about 15 min. Puree in a blender until smooth. Add cider, yogurt, and salt, and puree again. Serve with apple, pepper, and cream.

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One Final Recipe

This recipe doesn’t need much explaining. It’s one of my favorite fall recipes and demonstrates the perfect pairing of two quintessential fall ingredients, and I think it’s absolutely delicious.

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Article by Jillian Fox
Storing the Bounty
Article by Amanda Spackman

Unfortunately, our short Utah summer growing season is quickly drawing to a close, and this is the last time we get to share our food ideas with you and the fresh veggies are going to sleep for winter. Hopefully you've got a good bounty saved in your freezer so you can enjoy veggie goodness all year long. One nice thing is that many late season crops are either root vegetables (potatoes, beets, carrots) or bulb vegetables (like onions), or gourds (like squash and pumpkins). My point to all of this? Well, unlike a lot of the veggies we've been dealing with, these vegetables are resilient. They are thick-skinned and able to withstand a few weeks and even months without being used. Some tricks to getting these vegetables to last: store them in a cool, dark place (think “root cellar”). Some vegetables don't fare very well in the fridge. Potatoes, as an example, get an undesirable sweetness when refrigerated, and they actually rot faster. So a cool dark place will be fine, which is great because it means more room in the refrigerator. Another trick to getting them to last is to discard (or use) any vegetables that are not in prime condition. One bad egg can spread to the rest and you'll have a ruined batch. The last bit of advice is to know about how long you can store things so that they don't go bad when you forget about them in the dark scary place you've chosen. Here's a quick reference list...store away!

Potatoes: 38-40 degrees for 5-10 months
Winter Squash: 50 degrees for 1-6 months
Onions: 40-45 degrees for 1-3 months
Carrots: 32 degrees for 7-9 months
Beets: 32 degrees for 4-6 months

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Adieu
Article by Jillian Fox

As Amanda and I were contemplating the making of this last newsletter, we thought we might want to include a “goodbye” article, since, you know, this is goodbye after all. My first thought was, “That is really corny.” My second thought was, “That’s a good idea.” It’s natural to want to wrap things up, end with a bang if you will. First of all, to those who have diligently read our ramblings, opinions, and two-cents on all things vegetables – thank you.

This has been quite the undertaking for Amanda and I, and we can honestly say we have thoroughly enjoyed it throughout the summer. We tested all the recipes in our own kitchens and tried to give you honest-to-goodness advice on what to do with your vegetables each week. Of course we also tried to keep things light and fun, always with a little wit thrown in for good measure. So with farm-tanned arms and a belly full of delicious summer vegetables, we bid you adieu and wish you the best.