



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Vegetable Feature: New Potatoes By Chef Andrea

"Everyone has eaten a potato, but not everyone has eaten a truly new potato, freshly dug from the soil just days before serving. Once you do, your life is forever changed, because a new potato is everything good about a potato but more delicate, sweeter, and refined."—An excerpt from Chef Joshua McFadden's, *Six Seasons, A New Way with Vegetables*.

Potatoes are a vegetable everyone's familiar with, but not all are created equally and this week's potatoes are, in our opinion, very special. There is a short period of time early in the summer when we have the opportunity to eat "New Potatoes." New potatoes are not a variety, but rather a term used to describe potatoes that are harvested off of a plant that still has green leaves on it. Our usual practice is to mow down the potato vines about a week in advance of harvest. In the week between mowing down the vines and actually harvesting the potatoes, changes take place in the plant that help to set the skins and make them easier to handle without damaging the skin. It also gives them a more durable skin to protect the flesh and make them better for storage. These potatoes were dug last Saturday from plants with green vines. Freshly dug new potatoes have a flavor and texture unlike other potatoes throughout the season. It is a fresh, pure potato flavor and the skin is tender and delicate. Once cooked, the flesh is moist, creamy and smooth. Simply delicious!

The new potatoes in your box this week are a variety called Red Norland. They are an early red-skinned potato with creamy white flesh. They need to be handled with care so as not to disturb the skin and expose the flesh. We've given them the "white glove treatment" through the harvest and washing processes, but we encourage you to handle them with care as well. Wash them just before use and just give them a gentle scrub if needed.

Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark place, but not in the refrigerator. We store our potatoes in a warmer cooler at about 48-50°F which is most ideal. If potatoes are stored in colder temperatures (such as your home refrigerator), the starches will convert to sugars which is not what we want in a potato (save that characteristic for sweet potatoes!) So in a home setting, it's best to store them in a cool, dry location outside of the refrigerator where they will not be exposed to light which can cause the potatoes to turn green and bitter. If the potatoes have set their skins, in general they will store for a few weeks at room temperature in a brown paper bag (never in a plastic bag). However, this week's new potatoes will not store as well and are best eaten within one week.

I encourage you to slow down and really savor the flavor of these new potatoes as this is the only time during the season you'll be able to have this taste experience of freshly dug potatoes. You really don't need to do much to them and, in fact, I'd encourage you to do as little as possible! I am in agreement with Chef Joshua McFadden who recommends the following when using new potatoes:

"Simple cooking methods are best for these early-season potatoes—think boiling, steaming, and pan-roasting—and delicately

What's In The Box?

PURPLE CIPOLLINI ONIONS: These fresh cipollini onions are an excellent choice for oven-roasting or cut thick slices and put them on the grill!

FRESH PORCELAIN GARLIC: The skins surrounding the cloves on a bulb have not had a chance to dry down yet. They are more tough and a little hard to peel back, but when you do you'll find plump, juicy garlic cloves that have a mild, fresh flavor. Store fresh garlic at room temperature.

WHITE CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI: Use either broccoli or cauliflower in a summer curry dish along with green beans and potatoes!

GREEN AND/OR ITALIAN ZUCCHINI: Visit our blog to read this week's **Cooking With the Box** article where you'll find a link to a member-recommended recipe for **Zucchini Pizza Casserole!**

GREEN & YELLOW BEANS: If you have more vegetables than you can eat this week, consider preserving this week's pound of beans by freezing them. First trim away the stem end and cook them in boiling water for a few minutes just until they turn bright green and yellow. Remove them from the boiling water and shock them in ice water. Once cooled, put the beans in a freezer bag and pop them in the freezer.

RAINBOW CHARD: Rainbow chard has multi-colored stems and dark green leaves. Chard is a good green to use in Chef Andrea's recipe for **Summer Farmer Skillet** available in our recipe archives!

GREEN AND/OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS: Check out this week's **Cooking With the Box** article where you'll find a recipe for making a small batch of **Quick Refrigerator Pickles!**

NEW POTATOES: These aren't just any old potato! Check out this week's **vegetable feature** article for more information. New potatoes are best eaten within one week as their skins are very tender and have not been cured for longer storage time. Until you are ready to eat them, store them at room temperature in the brown paper bag we've packed them in.

ITALIAN BASIL: This is a delicate herb, so we recommend you put it to use within a day or two of receiving it. Make a small batch of the classic Italian basil pesto to toss with pasta or roasted potatoes, mix into scrambled eggs or use as the base "sauce" on a homemade pizza!

GREEN TOP RED BEETS: Use the beets and the greens! Wash the beet greens well and use them raw in salads or add them to your morning smoothie or green drink. A quick way to prepare the beets is to peel away the thin outer layer of skin using a paring knife. Cut the beets into bite-sized pieces and put them in a shallow pan with enough water to cover the beets by about half. Simmer, covered, until the beets are fork-tender, then add a pat of butter, salt and pepper and remove the lid. Continue to simmer gently for 5-10 more minutes or until the liquid has reduced and the beets are nicely glazed by the cooking liquid.

flavor with fresh herbs.....One of the beauties of a new potato is its undeveloped skin. That means no peeling, folks.”

So save your complicated potato recipes for another time and just focus on simple recipes and preparations that allow the flavor of the new potatoes to come to the forefront. All they really need is a little cooking time, a little butter or oil and light seasoning. In searching different cookbooks for references to new potatoes, this seems to be the general consensus in cultures around the world. I thought it was interesting to note a special reverence and emphasis on simplicity was given to “new potatoes” in recipes from all around the world including northern Europe, France, and India to name just a few. I’ve featured several of these recipes for you this week. Give one of them a try and pay particular attention to how delicious and creamy these potatoes are this week!

As we progress through the season, you will be receiving more varieties of potatoes. It’s important to know that some potatoes are classified as “waxy” while others are classified as “starchy,” or possibly a mix of the two classifications which we label “all-purpose.” These classifications are assigned based on the type of starch that comprises the flesh of the potato and it’s important to choose the appropriate cooking method for each type. Waxy potatoes are generally more moist and hold together better. They are best used for roasting, boiling or steaming, and are a good choice for soups and potato salad. I do not recommend mashing them because they usually become sticky and pasty. This week’s variety is a waxy potato. Starchy potatoes tend to be more dry and fluffy. This is a variety of potato appropriate for mashing as well as for making roasted potatoes, pan frying, etc. Starchy potatoes are also useful in soups, but they’ll likely fall apart which is actually good for thickening. As we progress throughout the season, make sure you read the “What’s In the Box” portion of the newsletter each week as we’ll give you information about the specific potato varieties as we deliver them so you’ll know the best ways to prepare and enjoy them. In the meantime, enjoy the fresh flavor and creamy texture of these freshly dug new potatoes!

New Potatoes Cooked in Their Jackets with Spices

Yield: 4-6 servings

1 ½ pounds new potatoes	¼ tsp whole cumin seeds	1 tsp garam masala
A piece of fresh ginger, about 1 ½ inches square, peeled and coarsely chopped	½ fresh hot green chili, finely sliced (optional), or ¼ tsp cayenne pepper	1 Tbsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground turmeric	1 cup chopped cilantro	2 Tbsp lemon juice
5 Tbsp vegetable oil	1 ¼ tsp salt	

1. Wash the potatoes well, but do not peel. Quarter them lengthwise, then dice them. Set aside in a bowl of cold water.
2. Put the ginger in the electric blender with the turmeric and 3 Tbsp water. Blend at high speed until smooth.
3. Heat the oil in a 10-12 inch heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the whole cumin seeds, and after about 10 or 20 seconds, when they change color, add the paste from the blender and cook for about 1 minute. Put in the sliced green chili if you are using it, and cook another 30 seconds.
4. Drain the potatoes and add them to the pot. Fry them, stirring, for about 5 minutes. Scrape the bottom of the pan as you stir. Put in the cilantro, lower heat a bit, and fry another 5 minutes, stirring gently. Add the salt, garam masala, coriander, lemon juice, cayenne pepper if you are using it, and 3 Tbsp warm water. Stir, scrape bottom gently, and cover. Reduce flame to very low and let the potatoes cook about 25 minutes, until done. Stir very gently every 10 minutes or so.
5. To serve: Lift out carefully and serve in warm shallow dish or platter. Try these potatoes with roast pork or lamb. They are very versatile in an Indian meal and can be served in an all-vegetarian lunch...—or they can be served with almost any meat or poultry dish.

Recipe borrowed from Madhur Jaffrey’s book, *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*.

Smashed New Potatoes with Lemon and Lots of Olive Oil

Yield: 4 servings

Kosher salt, to taste	Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 ½ pounds new potatoes, rinsed and just lightly scrubbed if they need it	1 lemon, halved
	Extra-virgin olive oil

1. Put the potatoes in a pot and add cold water to cover by 2 inches. Add salt until the water tastes like the sea. Bring to a gentle boil and boil the potatoes until they are very tender, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. With a ladle or a measuring cup, scoop out about ½ cup of the cooking water and drain the potatoes well. Put them back in the pot and crush them using a potato masher or a big fork or a wooden spoon. Squeeze on the lemon juice, season with ½ tsp salt and many twists of pepper, and add ¼ cup olive oil. Sprinkle on a Tbsp or so of the cooking water and crush a few more times and then taste. Adjust with more lemon, salt, pepper, or olive oil until the flavor is irresistible. Add a bit more cooking water if you like in order to make the texture chunky but a bit creamy.

Recipe from Joshua McFadden’s book with Martha Holmberg, *Six Seasons, A New Way with Vegetables*.

Author’s Note: “This side dish is so perfect on its own that I hesitate to suggest any additions, but if you must, a handful of freshly picked herbs—especially chives and dill—is fantastic.”

Visit our Blog where you will find one more new potato recipe - Butter-Steamed New Potatoes