



POTATOES AU GRATIN

Recipe taken from Once Upon a Chef
<http://www.onceuponachef.com/2014/12/potatoes-au-gratin.html>

Ingredients:

Butter to grease the baking dish
2-1/2 cups heavy cream
1-1/2 teaspoons salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
3 large Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes (about 2-1/4 pounds), peeled and sliced very thin
1 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8-inch (or 2-quart) baking dish with butter.

In a mixing bowl with a pouring spout (or large liquid measuring cup), whisk together the cream, salt and pepper.

Arrange some of the potato slices, edges overlapping, in a single layer on the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle 1/4 of the cheese over the potatoes and pour 1/4 of the cream mixture over top. Repeat with the remaining potatoes, cheese and cream, forming 4 layers. Pour any leftover cream over top.

Place in the oven and bake, uncovered, for about an hour, or until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife and golden brown on top. Let the dish settle and cool for about ten minutes before serving.

Nutritional Information

Calories:	531g
Fat:	42g
Saturated fat:	26g
Carbohydrates:	28g
Sugar:	1g
Fiber:	2g
Protein:	12g
Sodium:	928mg
Cholesterol:	150mg

KLEIN'S FARM & GARDEN MARKET

Certified as a United States Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices facility, Klein's Quality Produce, nestled in the Burlington Valley of Kane County, Illinois, has been bringing their produce to its market stands since 1966.

Klein's is dedicated to bringing the most wholesome produce to its' customer's tables, and as such utilizes a creek running through the property to assist in irrigation during dry spells as well as land management techniques to prevent flooding, monitors soil composition, and sprays crops with water before a frost to form a protective layer of ice.

Sources:

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/plant-russet-potato-21854.html>
<http://www.onceuponachef.com/2014/12/potatoes-au-gratin.html>
<http://www.kleinsqualityproduce.com/>
http://www.potatogrower.com/Images/0312/PALISADE%2002_opt.jpeg

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Russet Potatoes

In this pamphlet you'll learn about a local farm where russet potatoes are grown, methods to grow your own, nutritional information, and much more!

Produced in partnership with
Klein's Quality Produce and
Klein's Farm and Garden Market
of Burlington, IL

HISTORY

Certified as a United States Department of Agriculture Good Agricultural Practices (USDA GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) facility, Klein's Quality Produce, nestled in the Burlington Valley of Kane County, Illinois, has been bringing their produce to its market stands since 1966.

Klein's Quality Produce's mission is to provide fresh, great-tasting homegrown produce to the local community. I spoke with Alex Klein, the eldest son of the current generation of Klein's, about some of the farm's history.

Alex's grandfather bought the original plots of land in the 1960's in Burlington after moving from Bartlett. In the 1970's, the Klein's sold tomatoes to a Campbell's Soup Company processing plant near Chicago, and in the 1980's, sold tomatoes to a Heinz bottling plant in Iowa. During a small economic recession during the 1980's, Alex's grandfather seized the opportunity to purchase more land, creating a total of around 650 adjacent acres of farmland along a creek's edge, which is the current homestead and main farm. Since then, the Klein's have rented out other fields in the area for a total of 800 acres of farmable land. They currently use 5-10 acres for growing potatoes.

FARMING PRACTICES

Klein's starts their potatoes from seed, which is primarily ordered from two suppliers: Siegers Seed Company in Michigan, and De Raedt Seed Company in Hampshire, Illinois. Whenever possible, they try to plant cover crops to assist with the prevention of soil erosion and to recycle nutrients. These usually consist of grasses and hays. Klein's tries to keep a soil organic matter content of between 20 and 30%, by using cover crops as fertilizer.



In the picture to the lower left, the bottom of a potato seed wagon is shown. When pulled by a tractor, the angled wheels cut into the soil, creating two rows in a single pass. To prevent damage to the ceramic tile drainage system in their fields, the Klein's try not to till their fields. Below left, a potato harvester sits in a field after last year's harvest.



Russet potatoes are harvested about 10 weeks after they are planted—in Northern Illinois, this falls around early July. On the harvester, a blade scoops up the whole plant and shakes the soil off its roots. The plant and potatoes fall to the ground, where a ground crew walks along and picks the potatoes up off the ground. As the pickers' baskets fill with potatoes, they are brought to the hopper at upper right, which scrubs and washes the potatoes. Below, a steel washing tub sits locked against a barn wall. The potatoes fall into this tub to be hand washed and inspected before being shipped off to the market stands or put away into storage.



PLANTING YOUR OWN

Russet potatoes do best in cool weather, and as such should be planted about 3 weeks before the last frost. The rows should be about 3 feet apart, as the plant needs space to spread before it develops tubers. Add a nitrogen-rich fertilizer to your soil and add organic mulch if wanted. If planting using chunks, store them at room temperature in a dark and humid place for 1-3 days. Ensure each piece has an eye and a sprout, point the sprout upwards, spacing them about 12 inches apart and about 3 inches deep, covering with soil when done. Once the plants break the surface, apply another 3 inches of soil and liberal amounts of organic mulch. Water once to twice per week when soil is dry to the touch. In warm or frequently foggy areas, potatoes are prone to fungi, which can be cleared up by using fungicide. Diatomaceous earth helps guard against snails and aphids. Harvest after 10 weeks after the plant has died. Store in a cool, dark place.

Adapted from San Francisco Gate Home Guides <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/plant-russet-potato-21854.html>

WHY LOCAL?

Many people chose to eat locally because it grants a feeling of a closer connection to the food they are eating. It brings pride to the fact that the food being eaten was grown by a local farmer, and that the money spent will be kept in the local economy. There is also an environmental factor that over the years has been coined as fuel miles, which is the distance food travels from its point of production to point of consumption, measured in units of fuel to transport. Eating locally, and eating foods in-season, cuts potentially thousands of food miles each year, as compared to eating imported foods not in-season, preventing untold amounts of hydrocarbons from spent fuels from entering the atmosphere. If one decides to grow their own fruits and vegetables, they must be careful not to grow too large of a surplus, otherwise produce may spoil while waiting to be donated or eaten.