



PRODUCE NOTES

December 18, 2007

Promoting sustainable agriculture
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Fun Potato Facts

- Potatoes were introduced to the United States in 1719 by an Irish immigrant.
- Although French fries did not originate in the U.S., the term was coined by Thomas Jefferson, who famously served French food in the White House.
- The average American eats 140 pounds of potatoes per year, compared to 280 pounds consumed by the average European in the same period.
- The world's largest potato recorded in the Guinness Book of Records, grown in 1795 in England, weighed at eighteen pounds and four ounces.
- Potatoes: the final frontier? Grown by NASA and the University of Wisconsin, the first vegetable cultivated in space was the humble potato.

- Denise McAllan, Purchaser

Dry Farmed Potatoes from Little Organic Farms

We are very pleased to carry dry farmed heirloom potatoes grown by **David Little** of **Little Organic Farms** in Tomales Bay, California. All his produce is organic, and his goal in farming is quality, excellence, flavor and nutrition. Currently, David farms five different sites, which he rents. He works pieces of land that have been cow-trodden for a hundred years, puts in a crop of potatoes, and after the harvest he puts in a cover crop, which the landowner or another farmer can then plow under to enrich the soil.

Ask David Little what his favorite potato variety is, and he will tell you that his favorites change often. Some potatoes are better as new potatoes, some are most delicious after a period of storage. His best discoveries have happened through experimentation, luck, and fortunate accidents! For example, at a party, David met a ski instructor who mentioned that when he was a child in Sweden and times were tough, his mother would remove the black spots from old potatoes, and cook and mash them into the most delicious potato dish. David thought about it, and decided to give some unsightly, wrinkled Red Gold potatoes a try. After removing the black spots and cooking and mashing the potatoes, he was amazed at how incredibly flavorful they were. After making this discovery, David quickly sold out of these unlikely treasures at the local farmers' markets, and renowned chef Annie Somerville used them at Greens Restaurant in San Francisco.

David experiments with different varieties of heirloom potatoes to see which will grow well and become beloved by customers. All are special, because all are dry farmed. "Dry farming is not a technique I invented. It's an ancient technique," says David.

In dry farming, the soil is worked so that the moisture from the rains remains in the soil, and the plants do not need additional water. This technique produces potatoes with intense, delicious flavors (the downside for the farmer is lower yields per acre).

David began farming twelve years ago. There's a slow learning curve with farming, says David, and each year is different. "My motto now is: don't panic. Stay calm," he chuckles. David strongly believes in community and education as the key to the future of organic farming. He gives about 10,000 pound of potatoes to charities annually, and he enjoys giving



David Little
photo by Dani Yamamoto

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educational tours on the farms. He has had groups of thirteen-year-olds digging up potatoes on his farm, university students from Stanford interviewing him, and he is mentoring fledgling farmer Gary Mack. David believes that with education and exposure, more people will become interested in organic farming, and perhaps become farmers themselves. He hopes that he will inspire someone in the ways he's been inspired.

- Dani Yamamoto

For more information, write or call:

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Fingerling Potatoes with Rosemary

Serves 4

Ingredients:

1 pound of fingerling, or small size potatoes
¼ cup of olive oil
2-3 sprigs of rosemary
4-5 cloves of garlic

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Wash potatoes and cut in half. Toss all ingredients together and place in an oven-proof dish in the oven.
3. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until a fork inserts easily into the flesh. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot or cold.

- Denise McAllan, Purchasing

Straus Egnog: Get It Before It's Gone!

It's that time of year—Straus Family Creamery's incredibly rich, delicious eggnog is here, for a limited time! The season for eggnog is only two months; November to New Year. In 2003, Straus began making eggnog because at the time there was nothing like it on the market (there still isn't). There are no stabilizers, thickeners or emulsifiers, and no corn syrup or other unnatural ingredients in this delicious concoction. The ingredients are simple: milk, cream, sugar, egg yolk and nutmeg (all organic of course). These simple ingredients make for a wonderfully rich, flavorful eggnog unlike any you've ever tried. Drink it as is, or try adding brandy. A recipe for 1960's brandy eggnog calls for 12 ounces of brandy mixed into one quart of eggnog.

Thanks to **Kristen Heath** at **Straus** for providing us with this recipe for French toast, featuring Straus eggnog. Wow, what a delectable holiday treat. This is one recipe you definitely need to try!

- DY

Eggnog French Toast

½ cup Straus eggnog
4-5 thick slices bread*
1 egg
2 T Straus butter
powdered sugar or cinnamon sugar for dusting

In a small bowl, combine egg and eggnog, stirring with fork just until egg breaks up.

Dip sliced bread into mixture. Turn bread slices over and allow to sit in egg mixture 2-3 minutes per side.

In a skillet, melt 2 T Straus butter and sauté each slice over medium heat 2 ½ minutes or until golden brown. Turn over and cook an additional 1 ½ minutes. Serve immediately with a pat of butter and sprinkled with sugar, or pour over a little maple syrup, if desired.

*French bread or raisin bread works well, too.



Nutmeg flavors Straus' wonderful, holiday-time eggnog

