



The potato

The potato is a tuber from the solanaceae family originating in the Andes. Introduced to Europe in the 16th C, a Mr Parmentier made it popular in France in the 18th C. Cheap, easy to grow and keep, it is a basic foodstuff which has often been a life saver during food shortages.

There are two types of potato : :those which are floury and lacking in sugar and moisture (Bintje, Agria..),they contain a lot of starch and are ideal for mashed potatoes and for chips. Those with a firm, waxy texture, rich in moisture and with a low starch content (Ratte, Charlotte..) hold their shape well when cooking and are good for salads or for boiling.

Choice

Potatoes are available all the year round, nevertheless there is the new potato, first of the year (around the month of May) which has a superior flavour compared to other yellow potatoes and does not need peeling. Choose potatoes which are firm and whole, with no shoots or green parts.

Consumption

Starch plays a more or less predominant role in recipes. In certain dishes (gratin dauphinois), it is the ingredient that thickens : therefore the potatoes are not rinsed. Those to be used for chips are rinsed, otherwise they discolour when cooked. Potatoes to be cooked in water should be rinsed first to eliminate excess starch because this sets in the heat and forms a sort of hermetic layer which slows up the cooking.

Conservation

They are stored away from the light somewhere cool and dry, because if exposed to the light they turn green and become bitter and indigestible , toxic even. Kept in a refrigerator they will be sweeter than if kept at room temperature



Belgians pretend that chips were invented by people living beside the Meuse who had replaced their **fretin ?** with cut potatoes. The French insist that chips were invented in Paris during the Revolution. Americans call them french fries...



The nutrients are found just under the skin, so eat this as often possible.

85kcal/100G



PREPARATION

Once peeled, if they are not for immediate consumption, put them in cold water to prevent them turning black.

Scrub them well if they are to be cooked in their skins.



COOKING

Season whilst they are cooking (10 g of coarse salt per litre of water) and always start with cold water. Once cooked, avoid leaving them in the water as they swell up and the texture becomes 'gluey'.



PRESENTATION

As a change from chips you could offer home made potato crisps flavoured with herbs.

RECIPE SUGGESTIONS

Mini herbed potato blinis

Emulsion of potato and olive oil with apple

Find these recipes on www.atelierdeschefs.com