

CAMPFIRE POTATOES

Adapted from savorynothings.com

1 lb potatoes, halved
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 Tbsp butter, diced
1 Tbsp olive oil

1/4 c shredded cheddar cheese
2 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
salt and pepper
1/4 c chicken broth

1. Place 2 large pieces of heavy-duty aluminum foil over each other to form a cross. Place potatoes and onion in middle of foil. Sprinkle with cheese, butter, garlic, parsley, salt and pepper; drizzle with olive oil. Carefully toss with clean hands to coat potatoes.
2. Fold up the sides of the foil to form a bowl and pour chicken broth over potatoes, then fold foil down and seal pouch well.
3. On grill/fire: cook over medium heat for 30-40 minutes or until tender.
4. In oven: Bake foil packet at 425 degrees F for 30-35 minutes or until tender.
5. Careful when opening packets, hot steam will escape.

BLACK PEPPER CHICKEN

Adapted from everylastbite.com

1 Tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp baking soda
1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
1.5 lbs chicken breasts or thighs, 1-inch pieces
3 ribs celery
1 medium yellow onion
1 green bell pepper
3 green onions

1 in ginger, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic
2 Tbsp sesame oil
2 Tbsp honey
1/2 c beef stock
3 Tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp fish sauce
2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
2 tsp fresh ground black pepper

1. In a bowl whisk together soy sauce, baking soda, and apple cider vinegar. Add in chunks of chicken and stir. Let rest.
2. Combine honey, beef stock, soy sauce, fish sauce, and vinegar in blender until completely smooth. Pour sauce into small saucepan and reduce on medium heat for 5 minutes until reduced by half. Set aside.
3. Cut green pepper, onion, green onions, and celery into thin strips.
4. Heat 1 Tbsp sesame oil in skillet on high heat. Once hot, add chicken and cook 5 minutes or until chicken is golden in color. Transfer chicken to plate and set aside.
5. Add 1 Tbsp sesame oil to the pan, reduce heat to medium, and saute garlic and ginger for 1 minute until fragrant. Add peppers, onions, and celery and saute 4 minutes until softened. Add green onions, chicken, black pepper, and sauce and simmer 3 minutes. Serve.



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Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Carrots, Turnips, Beets, Radishes: Store in a bag, or other container in the coldest crisper bin of your fridge. If your root vegetables still have greens attached, cut them off. Keep the greens refrigerated in a closed plastic bag. The roots should last for weeks.

Squash: All summer squash and zucchini can be used interchangeably. Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin of your fridge. They should keep for more than a week.

Onions: Yellow onions are dried and should store well in the pantry. If you start to see green sprouting, use soon. If you only use part of an onion, wrap and store the rest in the fridge.

Potatoes: New potatoes are freshly dug and not yet cured. These should be stored in the refrigerator in a paper or perforated plastic bag.

Bugs

With summer in full swing, we are at the height of bug season. But things are not always as they appear. Teeny tiny insects can have a big impact on the world around them. As organic farmers, we have learned the value of making close observations of the wildly diverse insect populations that call Elmwood Stock Farm home, and gained a tremendous amount of respect for the ecological niche each and every one has capitalized on to do so.

Insects are only pests to farmers and gardeners when they are not kept in check and overpopulate their little patch of earth. Aphids, for example, are no bigger than a sesame seed, so a few of the little sap suckers on a tomato plant can't really do much harm. They are quite prolific at reproduction, however, so a few can become a few thousand in a few hot humid days, and collectively become a big problem. Thousands of little piercing proboscises not only suck nutrients out of the leaves and stems, they vector in plant diseases too. One option to prevent these outbreaks is to scout the plants on a daily basis and when some predetermined threshold number of aphids per plant is reached, a farmer can don their Tyvek suit and full-face respirator and proceed to spray some highly toxic synthetic chemical over and under all the leaves (fogging is now recommended to get good coverage) to annihilate each and every one. This is the accepted norm in commercial vegetable cropping circles and is the accepted approach to the situation by scientists at government-supported institutions of higher education across the country.

Some farmers worry about accurately predicting the threshold properly, or are lax in their scouting time and attention, so they just spray every week or ten days to be sure. This is the simplest and easiest way to 'control' pests, and diseases, so these weekly sprays are often cocktails for the pests and diseases du jour, just to take care of any and all villains lurking about. If you were to walk down the rows in a field managed this way (after the re-entry interval period has passed, for each chemical comes with a chart telling the sprayer how much time should pass before a human can safely return to the field), zero insects would show up on a scouting report. Problem solved.

This approach to food production is fraught with false hope and rife with problems. These chemicals are extremely toxic to humans, not just the pests. Do you want your food farmer exposing himself or herself, and part of the Elkhorn Creek watershed, to such? Do you want to wonder if your food farmer actually waited for the full harvest interval to pass before picking your food if they were in

fear of losing their livelihood? What happens to a postage-stamp-sized piece of earth that is suddenly denuded of life, of any kind? How will Mother Nature respond? Often by mutating and building resistance to the chemical as a survival mechanism for the species. If this remedy is so great, why does it have to be repeated over and over and over?

Well, as only Mother Nature would have it, some species of insect exploits every miniscule little slot in the balance of power on the planet, so as organic farmers, we use a fundamentally different approach to aphid management. The inherent ability of plants to bio-remediate their environment have cleared away the residual chemical toxins after two decades of clean farming. This has allowed several species of wasps to re-inhabit Elmwood Stock Farm. These are not the stinging pests feared by all, these are teeny tiny critters so small, an adult female can use her ovipositor to pierce the shell of the aphid and deposit her eggs within. This may cause some discomfort, or not, to the aphid, but it is otherwise unscathed. However, in a mere day or two, the braconid wasp egg hatches, and the emerging larvae eats the aphids guts to grow. The larvae eventually tunnel out through the aphid shell to become an adult. This parasitoid will move on to parasitize countless other aphids. So we do lots of scouting, watching the aphid population grow, and then begin seeing the aphid mummies appear, evidence of our little friends, secretly eliminating our potential pest outbreak. It may be days before humans can enter a chemical-laden field, but it took years before it was safe for these little wasps to move back home. We provide food for them in the form of flowers, and overwintering habitat in our pastures and fence rows, and we don't even own a Tyvek suit or full-face respirator.

As always, we invite you to come out for a farm tour sometime to hear more about our insect friends and foes, and more broadly, the ways our farming practices work with nature instead of working against it. We have taken the long view of food production by allowing Mother Nature to keep pestilence in check, since she does it much better than humans. Whether you're an avid entomologist, or whether anything six-or-more-legged gives you the creeps, you can eat in peace. -Mac Stone

Nourishment: Elmwood Stock Farm Tours 2024

August 3: Farming From Afar

September 14: Turkey Talk

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