



THE POTATO

Native of Peru and gift to the world, the "Queen and Lady of the Andes," the 'papa,' is a Kechua - Inca word meaning 'generous with the rest of the world.' The International Potato Center in Lima, capital of Peru, lists over 2,000 known species estimated to have been cultivated in the Andes 8,000 years ago, many lost to us today.



Potatoes have not always been smooth and tasty. They used to be unappetizing, bitter and resembling gnarly fingers. Domesticated by the Incas in the Peruvian highlands, they were used as a main source of energy for their empire. A staple of ancient Peruvian cultures up to this date, the potato can be cultivated up to 4,000 meters above sea level. It comes in a fascinating array of colors and shapes from white to bright yellow, purple and black.



The yellow fleshed Papa Amarilla is everybody's favorite in Peru. It must be boiled with skin on as it easily dissolves, is used to add consistency to soups and stews, as accompaniment for many dishes and sauces, and is especially delicious



when fried. The local Yukon Gold potato is what most closely resembles the 'yellow potato.'



The PAPA arrived in Europe approximately 40 years after the conquest of Peru by the Spaniards. Today potatoes are the fifth most important crop consumed in the world but in the 18th century it was the great novelty started by Christopher Columbus.

