



Potato Hunt

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Cherie Langlois

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It feels a lot like the dyed Easter Egg hunts I loved as a kid, and staged for our daughter when she was little.

The building anticipation as you seek something cunningly hidden – something special and pretty – followed by the delicious thrill of finding each brightly-hued egg, and the satisfaction of adding it to the growing pile in your basket.

This must be what it feels like to be a pirate who finds buried treasure, too.

I'm talking about digging potatoes, something I can't wait to do this afternoon. But not just any old potatoes – purple potatoes.

Several years ago, my eyes opened to the wonderfully (and genetically) diverse world of heirloom plants. Essentially, these are open-pollinated plant cultivars with long histories, many of them endangered because they fell out of favor as the popularity of commercial hybrid cultivars boomed.

I've always been a fan of potatoes, but now love them even more as I continue to discover different heirloom varieties. The first year of my heirloom conversion, I grew a fantastic dusky purple potato with creamy-white flesh called the Purple Viking.

The next season, I planted Viking seed potatoes I'd saved, and added super-productive All Blues, which shimmered a gorgeous deep purple on the outside after washing, and once cut open, were a startling purple-blue through and through.

Today, I'll be searching for All Blue potatoes, as well as this year's new variety: slender French Fingerlings with red skin, creamy-yellow flesh, and a buttery texture when cooked.

Here's what I'll be making with my buried treasure:

Garlic Roasted Potatoes

(adapted from Greek Meze Cooking, Tapas of the Aegean, by Sarah Maxwell)

Ingredients

About 2 lbs. large heirloom potatoes
½ cup olive oil
½ cup lemon juice
2 tsp. dried oregano
3 to 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
salt and pepper to taste
½ cup water

Preparation

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Cut potatoes into small wedges and put in large shallow baking dish. Stir together the remaining ingredients in a small bowl and add to the potatoes. Toss to coat.

Bake at the top of the oven, uncovered, for 1 hour until the potatoes are crisp outside and soft inside. Stir several times during cooking to rearrange potatoes, and add a little more water if needed.

Gotta go dig,

~ Cherie

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