

Selecting a Potato Variety

Introduction

Potato seems to fill a very wide role in Scottish cooking so it's no surprise that it is also common in Marion's Meals. We use them as baked, boiled, mashed, wedged, diced, sliced, or roasted!

The end results all start with the same step – choosing the right potato!

Choosing A Potato

Yes, choosing a potato variety is a real thing and something you need to consider.

If you use a soft, floury, potato for boilers you will get a mushy mess that ends up in the compost bin! If you use a waxy potato for mash, you do not get the smooth, creamy texture we aim for.

The supermarkets try to make this easier for us by selling a “general, all-rounder” – somewhere between floury and waxy. The results from these are usually ok, and that's what many folk use. There's nothing wrong with them but, then again, nothing special.

There are dozens of potato varieties available, but not many are common in the local supermarket.

So, how do we choose?

Boiling or Salad Potato

You want to select a potato that is classed as waxy and that will hold its shape when boiled.

My favourite – and also one of the most popular – is Charlotte, with its yellowish, waxy texture.

Another benefit is that Charlotte is very easy to grow. If you are new to gardening or even just want to try a single potato sack on your balcony, you can't go much wrong if your only variety is Charlotte.

It is classed as a “Second Early” and can be cropped around 4 months of planting. I am able to plant them from mid April, meaning I start to pick them in mid to late August.

A simple wash in cold water and they can be cooked with skin on.

Mash, Roast, Baked and Wedges

You want to select a potato that is floury and will become fluffy when roasted or soft and creamy when mashed.

I have a few “go-to” potatoes in this category, namely Desiree, Maris Piper or King Edward. These are traditional potatoes in the UK that are very common in the supermarket.

If you are going to grow potatoes, then select a variety that is successful in your area. I've picked varieties that grow very well in Central Scotland. *Note that other texts claim Desiree does not grow in Scotland. Mmm, they must mean a different Scotland as I've grown them successfully for years!*

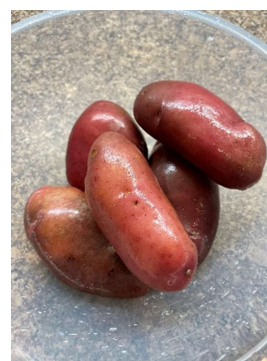
These potatoes are classed as a “Main Crop” and can be harvested around 4 to 5 months after planting. I am able to plant them from mid April onwards meaning I start to pick them in late August or September.

They store very well over winter.

I tend to peel these potatoes for mashing but leaving skin-on for wedges does give a nice touch.



Charlotte – a yellow, waxy potato



Desiree – a red-skinned floury potato

Note: I have not discussed “First Early”, “New” or “Baby Boilers” as they don't freeze and reheat well and, therefore, do not feature in Marion's Meals.