



DIETITIAN'S CORNER

Here is some interesting info about an ingredient used by Chef Cyruss in his recipe.

CALDO VERDE WITH BROA DE MILHO, ALMOND ROMESCO, AND SAO JORGE CHEESE

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL (EVOO)

Part of the famously known “Mediterranean diet”, extra virgin olive oil, short-named EVOO, has been a staple for some of the healthiest populations in the world. Some say it’s one of the healthiest fats that can be consumed, and that statement is supported by countless studies.

Olive oil is made by crushing olives and separating the oil from the pulp in a centrifuge. EVOO is the best quality oil available and contains both vitamins E and K; it is mostly composed of monounsaturated fats (healthy fats), and shines with its high antioxidant content (polyphenols). Those two components have been found to reduce chronic inflammation, which is believed to be among the leading drivers of many diseases, including heart disease and strokes, cancer, diabetes, etc. Antioxidants also help prevent cellular damage caused by molecules called free radicals. This cellular damage is playing a role in the development of certain cancers.



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EVOO in the kitchen

Extra virgin olive oil can be used safely in all cooking methods (i.e. sautéing, pan-frying, oven-baking), as it is very resistant to heat. However, deep frying for a long time can lead to the production of a toxic compound called acrolein. Some research has shown that pan-frying produce such as tomatoes, onions and garlic in olive oil improves the bioavailability of some beneficial antioxidants (carotenoids and polyphenols) found in these staples.



Did you know?



The only difference between green and black olives is ripeness. Green olives are harvested before they ripen, while black olives aren't harvested until they are fully ripe.

An olive tree can live up to 600 years.

Archaeologic evidence shows that back in 6000 BC, olives were already used to make olive oil.



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POTATO

Potatoes have been on family dinner tables for decades. They are cheap, available year long and are consumed worldwide. However, the humble spud has fallen in popularity in the last years, due to the “low-carb” trend. It is true that the potato is rich in carbohydrates, and when consumed in its most popular form, i.e. French fries, it is high in added fat. However, the original product provides a fair amount of fibre, vitamins (C, B6, Folate), minerals (potassium, magnesium) and phytochemicals, especially when the skin is left on, which gives it its legitimate place as part of a diversified and healthy diet.


The problem is not so much the potato itself, but the “extra stuff” that we generously pile on the “spud”. Oil, sour cream, butter, cheese, and mayonnaise all add extra calories (and flavour, too!), but the potato itself is relatively low in calories (94 calories in a medium-size potato) and almost fat-free. Quercetin, a type of phytochemical from the flavonoids family and found in the potato skin, appears to have an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effect that protects the body’s cell from damage induced by free radicals. That’s one reason not to peel the potato... the other good reason – it’s a lot tastier to keep the skin-on!



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To make a healthier version of the famous potato salad usually loaded with mayonnaise, simply boil baby new potatoes (with the skin on), leave to cool, then add freshly chopped garlic and fresh herbs, a tiny pinch of salt, a generous amount of freshly cracked black pepper and toss with extra-virgin olive oil.

Fun facts:



There is a Canadian Potato Museum, located in Prince Edward Island. It has won many awards and has been named one of the top 11 food museums in the world by CNN.

In 1995, potato plants were taken into space with the space shuttle Columbia. This marked the first time any food was ever grown in space.

The world's largest potato producing country is... China.

In 1952, Mr. Potato Head became the first toy advertised on television; in 1995, he made his debut in Hollywood with a leading role in Disney's Toy Story. Today, Mr. Potato Head is no more as it has been rebranded to be gender neutral. However, it remains a Potato Head! So much for such a humble spud!

