



Contact: Amy Wood, Harvest PR  
503-274-0086, ext. 102/[amy@harvest-pr.com](mailto:amy@harvest-pr.com)

## HUMBLE INGREDIENT TAKING ROOT: THE POTATO SURFACES AS CULINARY STAR IN TWO NORTHWEST COOKBOOKS

*Local authors highlight potatoes' culinary intrigue and versatility in recipes, from Twice-Baked Gruyère Potatoes to Stacked Chicken Potato Hash*

**PORTLAND, Ore.** – August 2, 2012 – There has never been a better time for cooks to get back to their roots. With two Northwest cookbook authors scrubbing the dirt away from a vegetable seemingly more at home underground than on the glossy page, the Oregon potato is taking its bulbous bow.

This September, celebrated author and Chef Diane Morgan is releasing [Roots: The Definitive Compendium](#), a comprehensive reference book and cookbook with more than 225 recipes that explore the history and lore of root vegetables, including what Morgan refers to as the “agreeable potato.”

In a chapter devoted entirely to potatoes, Morgan explains that there are “thousands of varieties that vary by size, shape, color, water content, and starch level.” In addition to storage and handling tips, she offers 14 unique potato recipes, ranging from Twice-Baked Gruyere Potatoes with Lots of Green Onions to globally inspired dishes, such as Suneeta’s Potato Chaat with Cilantro-Mint Chutney.

“Incredibly versatile,” the potato can be boiled, baked, roasted, steamed, simmered, sautéed, grill-roasted, and deep-fried, she explains. “I’m always inspired by this ‘workhorse’ of a vegetable that adapts from side dish staple to spotlight ingredient.”

Another Northwest writer, food blogger Clark Haass, is praising potatoes in the release of his first cookbook this fall. [Hashcapades: The Art of the Perfect Hash Adventure](#) will take readers on a journey through hash recipes from all over the world.

“Hash dishes are so interesting because you can truly make them anything you want them to be,” Haass says. “The center of virtually all hash creations is the potato.”

Choosing the right kind of potato is key, he notes. “For example, the Yukon Gold has a creamy texture that can hold its own in hearty dishes, while also retaining its shape when chopped and sautéed. Whereas a variety like the Russet, which has more starch and a robust skin, is perfect for hash dishes that demand a rustic treatment.” On his [Hashcapades blog](#), Haass describes how he tested four different potato varieties to determine his favorite for hash recipes.

To identify and highlight the flavor differences among regional potatoes, the Oregon Potato Commission has engaged with the local chef community, including the American Culinary Federation’s Chefs de Cuisine Society of Oregon.

“The concept of *terroir* extends to potatoes,” explains Chef Leif Eric Benson, Oregon’s 2010 chef of the year and OPC public member. “A single variety grown in two different regions, or *terroirs*, can produce two unique potatoes.”

**Editor’s Note:** Recipes and images from *Roots* and *Hashcapades* available upon request.

**About the Oregon Potato Commission**

The Oregon Potato Commission was formed in 1949 to represent the state's five potato growing regions (Blue Mountain, Central Oregon, Klamath, Malheur and Willamette Valley) in educational, trade development, research, legislative affairs, and public relations activities. Development of sales and markets for Oregon's potato crop is one of the Commission's roles. Programs are designed to improve Oregon's market share in-state and in other prominent West Coast markets. Export markets for processed potato products and, increasingly, fresh potatoes and raw product are also included in market development and promotional programs in the Pacific Rim and other market areas. The Commission's largest focus is on a series of ongoing research programs in cooperation with Oregon State University. The results of these programs place Oregon among the top in the United States in potato production volume and yield per acre. For more information, visit [www.OregonSpuds.com](http://www.OregonSpuds.com).

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