

# ALI'S KITCHEN

## Delicious as the Day They Were Invented

Baked potatoes in this recipe are loaded with fresh baby spinach and meaty mushrooms

Column and photos by Ali Carter, Wisconsin Potato Growers Auxiliary

During a sleepless night not too long ago, I randomly wondered about the origins of the baked potato. I'm told this is an odd thing for one to Google at 2 a.m., but I learned some interesting tidbits in those early morning hours.

According to historian Andrew Martin, it is difficult to narrow down one exact person in time who came

up with the delicious idea.

Martin writes, "There is no known specific 'a-ha' moment when the baked potato was 'invented.'"

He continues, "The simplicity of the tuber roasting in the embers of a fire or the back of an oven was incredibly rudimentary and likely to

*continued on pg. 54*



### INGREDIENTS:

#### Spinach and Mushroom Baked Potatoes

- 4 large russet potatoes
- 1 Tbsp. coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4 cups cremini mushrooms, chopped
- pinch of salt
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 cup feta cheese, crumbled

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have been around far longer than we might imagine. Given its popularity in various regions of the world, it would be difficult to pinpoint exactly who had the initial idea."

Martin says that, in England, the baked potato has been a common food for centuries.

"At one time in the 19th century, they were hawked by street vendors, especially 'selling like hotcakes' in the colder months, which coincided with their harvesting schedule," he explains.

"Buyers used the spuds as convenient hand warmers by stuffing the piping hot 'jacket potatoes' in their coat pockets for warmth before ultimately eating them," Martin notes. "It was once estimated that 10 tons of baked potatoes were sold daily in London at the height of this craze."

Here is our family's latest version of the baked potato. This one is loaded with fresh baby spinach and meaty mushrooms, then topped with a bit of creamy feta.

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

With a fork, poke holes around each



potato (this will help the heat to escape while baking).

Wrap each potato in tin foil and bake in the oven for 40-50 minutes, or until you can easily pierce through the cooked potatoes with a fork.

When the potatoes are nearly finished baking, begin preparing the mushroom spinach filling. In a skillet, add coconut oil, garlic, cremini mushrooms and a pinch of salt.

Cook on medium heat for 5-10 minutes. Add the baby spinach to the skillet and cook until wilted (approximately 2-3 minutes).

Slice open baked potatoes and fill with mushroom and spinach mixture. Top each potato with a bit of feta cheese.

Serve while hot. Enjoy! **BC'T**

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