

## ask a chef

If you've ever dreamed of having a chef on retainer, here's the next best thing (or almost): this column. To start, we ask Ann Gentry, our own executive chef and the visionary founder of the organic vegan eatery Real Food Daily, which kitchen tool she thinks is well worth the splurge. Here's what she told us:

### NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Tell us your burning question at [vegetarianimes.com/askachef](http://vegetarianimes.com/askachef), then check for it, along with a chef's expert answer, in an upcoming issue.

My all-time favorite home kitchen tool is the pot I've had the longest, a 3½-quart Le Creuset French Oven. After about 25 years, the lid still fits snugly. And the nonreactive enamel coating is scratch-resistant, so it still looks good! I love that it's perfect for one-pot meals. Made of cast iron, it distributes heat evenly and allows me to cook using a medium to low flame, which works well when you prepare lots of vegetables and grains as I do. I can also put it in the oven for

casseroles. I recently splurged on two bigger sizes; each time, I was anxious about the high price, but bought the pot anyway because I knew what a great product I was getting. Also, Le Creuset has added all these bright, fun colors. So not only do I have more pots that will last a lifetime, but now there's cherry red and Caribbean blue in my collection. ♣



## peak season

BY Maggie Patinelli

“Laura went into the garden, and with her fingers dug carefully into the hills of potatoes to find new potatoes.”

—Laura Ingalls Wilder, *These Happy Golden Years*

**Tender new potatoes** are still harvested today the way Laura Ingalls did on the frontier—by hand. The thin-skinned young tubers, dug when green leaves are still growing above ground, have a lower starch content than older crop potatoes, making them sweeter and more subtly flavored.

# NEW POTATOES

### Types to try

Many people think of new potatoes as just small spuds eaten with the skin on, but a more accurate definition is a young potato whose skin is so thin and flaky that it can be rubbed away with your thumb. Any potato variety can be dug at this early stage and some are not so small—so try whatever is being grown locally. Favorite farmers' market offerings include fingerlings, Bintjes, Russian Bananas, yellow Finns, and Irish cobbles.

### How to buy and store

Choose new potatoes of similar size so that they cook in the same amount of time. Store in a dark, cool, well-ventilated place and use within three days ♣

### CHEF'S TIP

“Toss halved new potatoes with chunks of red onions (my favorite), olive oil, and salt and pepper. Roast 20 minutes on a baking sheet in a 450°F oven.”

—Ann Gentry, owner, vegan eatery Real Food Daily

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