

August 30, 2013

Media information**Potato Festival on September 21 in Rīga: Come One, Come All!**

Long live the potato! The spud! The tuber! The tater! During the latter weeks of September, it doesn't matter in which direction you drive in Latvia – everywhere you will see tractors which are slowly crossing fields, and behind them there are people bending over or squatting with baskets or buckets in their hands. This is an important part of the Latvian landscape – Latvians are harvesting potatoes. If you stop at the side of the road, you will feel the lovely smell of freshly turned earth, as well as the smoke from campfires where the workers roast their potatoes in their jackets. The potato is still a link between urban Latvians and the countryside, and those who visit friends or relatives to help with the potato harvest benefit in at least three ways: A chance to spend some time in fresh air, an opportunity to meet loved ones after a long pause, and the ability to get their hands on some healthy potatoes. Oh, and that is to say nothing about the fantastic countryside dinner that is awaiting once the work is done. Yes! These are our traditions. This is our community.

Because we Latvians eat so many potatoes, why not celebrate the potato harvest? Country Traveller has joined with the Latvian Association of Potato Growers and Processors and the Kalnciema Street Block to organize a Potato Festival!

- The County Traveller information tent will be an embassy for the countryside. Here you will be able to find the best places to find the widest variety of countryside goodies, from potatoes to grapes. Perhaps you wish to enjoy a sunny late summer weekend with crispy potato pancakes with whortleberry jam? Country Traveller will be happy to find you a place where you can do exactly that.
- The Kalnciema Street market will be open from 10:00 AM. You will be able to buy the tastiest potatoes directly from the source, as well as various treats and products made of potatoes.
- Shortly before 11:00 AM, the Putni folklore group will bring music to the celebration, and later the women of Rucava will demonstrate their song skills. After that, potato growers will take the stage to share in their wisdom – which types of potatoes are best for crispy potato pancakes, which ones are most productive, which ones are in the greatest demand, which ones should be bought, which ones should be planted, etc.
- At 11:00 AM, Chef Ēriks Dreibants from the Trīs Pavāru Restaurant will offer a master's class on using modern recipes to cook potatoes. He will cook a potato and smoked salmon soup, tongue with potatoes and hemp, hazelnuts and rapeseed oil, as well as sweet potato chocolate candies.
- After 1:00 PM, there will be another master's class, this one focusing on the traditional potato dishes of Kurzeme. Sandra Aigara from the "Zvanītāji" traditions centre and the women from Rucava will get busy with traditional dishes such as Kurzeme soured soup, potato packets with creamy bacon sauce, and crispy potato pancakes with bacon.
- You will learn many interesting facts about potatoes. There will be potato relay races and competitions. A children's room will be open all day long to offer various interesting and creative potato-related activities. Kids will be able to draw pictures of and with potatoes, make potato stamps, and prepare miniature potato sculptures.

The potato festival is part of the INTERREG IVA Central-Baltic project "Facilitating the Value and Potential of Cultural Heritage in Country Tourism in Latvia."

See you at the Potato Festival!

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This article contains the views of the author, and the Managing Institution is not responsible for information that is published by project partners.

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