

THOUGHTS FROM THE KITCHEN

Greek style potatoes

I was working in the kitchen, listening to the news and wondering: ‘Why are we so very keen on group identity?’ It can mean a great deal to be from this or that neighbourhood, village, country, religion, political party,

Andy Yeomans reflects on how we often see diversity as a threat rather than an enrichment, whilst sharing a simple recipe for potatoes.

colour, race, gender, age... the list goes on and demonstrates the great diversity within human nature.

I suppose one reason is that it helps us feel secure, that we ‘belong’, that we can draw strength from solidarity with a number of others who share the same history, or similar views or characteristics – in contrast to those that

don’t, and who therefore represent some form of ‘threat’.

It helps bolster our sense of self-justification. If these other people with whom I associate believe what I do, then that somehow underpins the rightness of my convictions and world view – or sometimes my prejudices, resentments, hang-ups, lack of tolerance, my incomplete or lazily thought-through ideas...

Perhaps this is just a characteristic of human nature, something we all do to a greater or lesser extent, and always will. But the damage, the hurt to ourselves and others, happens when we let such thinking dominate our lives, at the expense of any alternative vision.

Might we perhaps focus more, not on what divides us and makes my group different from yours, but on what unites us all in a universal brotherhood and sisterhood of people? Kindred human beings, who share in common so much more than what makes one lot distinct from another, with the implication of rightness, superiority, or favoured status.

Yes, I draw a kind of strength from the different communities or groups that I see myself belonging to. But history shows us vividly enough what happens when humanity fractures itself up into competing nationalisms, factions, alliances etc. I know in my heart that I need to draw my strength mainly from elsewhere: not from distinction and division, but from a sense of unity, solidarity, respect and love towards my fellow man and woman.

There are external perils enough bearing down on us. Our real strength, our true ‘specialness’ lies in our common humanity. Now more than ever we all need each other. We really do.

This Mediterranean style dish has the potential to unite diverse groups in a common love of potatoes! Great with a salad as a light vegetarian summer evening meal, or with meat or fish etc. 🍷

Ingredients:

- ▶ 6-7 medium potatoes
- ▶ 3-4 garlic cloves, grated or finely chopped
- ▶ 4-5 tbsps olive oil
- ▶ Rosemary and thyme (optional)
- ▶ 250-350 ml water/stock
- ▶ 2-3 tsps of oregano
- ▶ 3-4 tbsps lemon juice
- ▶ Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper

Method

Pre-heat oven to 200C. Mix together olive oil, half the water/stock, garlic, lemon juice, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper. Coat potatoes and spread out in an oiled roasting tin in a single layer. Cook for 60-90 mins, turning occasionally and adding more water/stock to prevent drying out. Add the oregano about half way through.



Photo: Andy Yeomans