

Hanna Perez

Professor Lyndell O'Hara

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### **Frame it yourself one: The network of potato**

*"I am proud to be Peruvian, and I am happy"* is a part of the lyrics of an emblematic Peruvian song that everyone learns when they are little. Peruvians are known to go anywhere in the world and let people know how proud we are for what we have, our wonder of the world, Macchu Pichhu, our multiple recognitions as the best gastronomic destination, and although it sounds funny, for our variety of potatoes. The Peruvian territory has the largest number of potato species known in the world, and that is why, tying myself to my roots, I chose to write about this topic.

Although we are all familiar with potatoes today, the tuber was a surprising novelty in the late agrarian era. The potato was domesticated in the South American Andes some eight thousand years ago and was brought to Europe in the mid-16th century, from where it spread westward and northward, eventually returning to the Americas and beyond (Arguedas 2020).

Its domestication began near Lake Titicaca, almost 1,000 kilometers southeast of Peru's capital; after this process, the first potatoes spread across the mountain range and became an important food supply for indigenous communities, including the Incas. Sadly for them, the Spanish invasion arrived in 1532, and it was the Spaniards who took the tubers to the other side of the Atlantic, along with other foods, and it was thus that the potato left the American continent.

The establishment of potatoes in Europe was complicated because the land was different from that of South America, which is why there had to be a process of

domestication of potatoes in this new territory. The first decades of planting in the Old Continent were not successful, and it was only when they moved the crops to Ireland that the potatoes found better conditions to mature and be edible.

The potato became very popular for its good taste and high nutritional level, allowing entire families to be healthy regardless of their social status. The European communities constantly consumed this food, so it became much more widespread, little by little (See image 1).

It is interesting to think about how a food could become the saving grace for many. The Old Continent lived under the permanent threat of famine, and although, at first, many were wary of this new agricultural product, it ended up being what saved many from imminent death.



## Works Cited

Arguedas Ortiz, Diego. "How the Humble Potato Changed the World." *BBC Travel*, BBC, 3 Mar. 2020, [www.bbc.com/travel/article/20200302-the-true-origins-of-the-humble-potato](http://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20200302-the-true-origins-of-the-humble-potato).