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LI Potato Festival puts down roots in Calverton

August 3, 2015 by JIM MERRITT. Special to Newsday /



It's time to root for everyone's favorite tuber. The Long Island Potato Festival is back Sunday, Aug. 9, for a second serving of starchy treats; tests of peeling, mashing and salad-making skills; and tater-centric cooking demonstrations. It's all geared toward turning the humble yet versatile side dish into the main course for a day.

This go-round, new attractions and menu items have been added to the event, which drew 1,500 last August to Peconic Bay Winery in Cutchogue. The expanded spudfest has been transplanted to the Calverton Links golf course,

where roughly 2,000 attendees are expected. Also on hand will be more than 40 exhibitors who will put their culinary spins on the dinnertime staple whether you like them French fried, mashed or baked. And with potato farms comprising 2,500 acres on Long Island, local potato growers will also be on hand.

"It's a family fun-filled day, you get to taste some local products, and people's creativity is shining through," says Kristyn Dolan, marketing manager for Bay Shore-based Starfish Junction Productions, which is sponsoring the event.

PIES AND FRIES

The Long Island Pie Co., which is based at the Stony Brook University business incubator in Calverton, is the new potato on the block. Jordan Levine of Commack, "the Pie guy" who bakes for his family's business, Baiting Hollow Farm and Vineyard in Baiting Hollow, says he's bringing an assortment of fruit and savory pies. The latter includes a potato and peas pie, which Levine says is "like a classic shepherd's pie without the beef." Free 2-ounce samples of the pies, including one made with potatoes and spinach, will be available.

Want beer-soaked fries with that? Hop Fries of Manville, N.J., will be selling hand-cut fries marinated overnight in a blend of India pale ale,

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fried twice in lard and seasoned with hop salt, [advertisement](#) | [advertise on newsday](#)

says company owner-entrepreneur Justin Rod.

"The smell usually brings people over," says

Rod, who'll be whipping out samples and selling half-dozen batches of hop fries smothered in a sauce of roasted garlic, ale and Cheddar cheese(\$5).

If you've only got eyes for Mr. Potato Head, a new booth will be staffed with volunteers accepting donations of the spud muffin's plastic noses, ears and lips for a possible museum exhibit next year. And once again, kids can use broccoli, carrots and other veggies affixed with toothpicks to give the grumpy one his facial features. "Kids can build a Mr. Potato Head competing in different categories, like the funniest and cutest," says Jaime Pacheco of Kids Need More, a Copiague-based nonprofit organization sponsoring the contest.

The event will also include sack races, a potato peeling contest, the Best Amateur Potato Salad Contest (bring your own for judging), and mashed potato eating and sculpting contests (though not in the same bowl). And potato growers will make sure no one leaves empty-handed.

"At the end of the festival," Dolan says, "they'll be giving away local farm potatoes, a party gift for coming."

The Long Island Potato Festival

WHEN | WHERE Sunday, Aug. 9 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Calverton Links, 149 Edwards Ave., Calverton

INFO \$20 (includes parking), free ages 12 and younger; 631-940-7290, [lipotatofest.com](#)

Grown on LI Day

Hungry for more locally grown farm products? The fifth Annual "Celebrate Grown on Long Island Day" in Yaphank will feature a farmers market where you can pick up roasted corn, wine and other products from Long Island's 35,000 acres of working farms.

The market also features activities for kids and a seafood throwdown with two chefs battling to impress guest judges including season 3 "MasterChef Junior" finalist Kayla Mitchell of Center Moriches.

WHEN | WHERE Friday, Aug. 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Suffolk County Farm and Education Center, 350 Yaphank Ave., Yaphank

INFO Free; 631-727-3777, [celebrategrownonli.com](#)

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