

The Humble Onion



Kia ora koutou,

Did you know the onion family includes not only brown, white and red onions, but also garlic, chives, shallots, spring onions and leeks? Onions are rich in antioxidants, which help to slow free radical damage in our bodies caused by things like pollution, sun exposure, and the normal ageing process.

Commonly grown around the town of Pukekohe, main-crop (brown) onions have a strong flavour and taste best when cooked. Use onions in stews, soups, stir-fries (leeks also go great in these), or on top of pizzas or with pasta.

Tip Cook onions first in your pan or a pot. If there are spices in your recipe, add them with the onions at the start to cook them slowly and help bring out their flavour.

Red onions taste great raw or cooked. Try red onions, spring onions, or chives finely sliced in salads, sandwiches or as a garnish. Although red onions add flavour and make a salad look more colourful, they are often more expensive.



Look for onions with a dry, papery outer skin and avoid green shoots or soft spots. Store in a cool, dark and well-ventilated place such as at the bottom of the pantry, in a non-plastic bag or a box with holes in it. Do not store with other food (particularly potatoes as it can speed up their ripening process and sprouting).

Scalloped Potatoes

- 3 large carrots
- 3 large potatoes
- 2 onions
- White sauce

1. Slice carrots and potatoes in rounds of about 0.5cm in thickness.

2. Slice onions into fine rounds.

3. Layer in a pie dish starting with potato, then carrot, then onion, and repeat until used.

4. Pour white sauce* over the top. Bake in oven on 180°C for about 1 hour or until potatoes and carrots are cooked through. When cooked, an ordinary kitchen knife should poke through the layers of potato and carrots easily.

*White Sauce

Mix the following ingredients in a pot over, cook over low heat, and stir to break up lumps:

2 cups milk, 2 tablespoons plain flour,
1 teaspoon mustard, ½ teaspoon stock powder,
1 teaspoon salt & pepper to taste,
1½ cups grated Edam cheese +
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional).

For a full balanced meal, serve with a salad on the side plus a protein portion (the size of your palm) such as beans or lentils, fish, seafood, or lean meat.

Ngā mihi nui,
Beyning