

Features

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7:25 9:35

Machine patented for quick manufacture

Spud skins billed 'skincredible' snacks

United Press International
NEW YORK — The potato skin, long one of the most cursed and blessed of culinary items, is coming into its own as a snack food.

Many generations of scullery maids, soldiers and housewives have fretted over the labor of peeling spuds by hand so they could be fried, boiled or mashed.

Simultaneously, some physicians and many mothers contended the potato baked in its skin contains more nutrition than any other — and the mothers insisted that youngsters not leave the table until they had eaten the last bit of skin along with the buttered meat of the baked spud.

But the nutritiousness of the

potato skin really is only a minor factor in its rise to popularity as a snack food, says Bill Daniels, marketing director of J. R. Simplot Co. of Caldwell, Idaho, the world's biggest marketer of potatoes.

The company recently has put on the wholesale and institutional food market two shapes of potato skin called Skincredibles. One is a strip for use as a cocktail hors d'oeuvre, the other a shell for making canapes filled with sausage, other meats, cheese and garish vegetables or for dipping.

Daniels said Simplot got the idea from restaurants that were making the potato skin snacks by hand. Simplot proceeded to develop and patent a cutting machine to make them in large quantities. The skin strips and shells have from a quarter to half an inch of potato meat on them. The shells are about one-third of a whole potato in area.

They are par-fried then frozen and packed in fairly large containers for the restaurant trade. "Simplot doesn't pack anything for the retail market," Daniels said.

"A few of our customers are repacking Skincredibles for the retail trade under their private brand names and we have had inquiries from other retail packers. Such packers either would have to pay Simplot for the right to use its cutting machines or develop their own machines," he said.

Daniels said Simplot developed the potato skin snacks just because they're good and because the market for snack foods of all kinds is growing rapidly. People who like snack foods clearly like variety.

The Skincredibles have to be

thawed and re-cooked either by frying briefly in deep fat or baking in a normal or microwave oven before serving.

Daniels said Simplot was not looking for a by-product in developing the potato skin snacks. If anything, it's the other way around; potato meat scooped out when the shells and strips are formed is the by-product and goes into flour or other processed potato products.

"Potato skins taste good," he says. "The only thing that's kept them off the commercial market up to now is the time and trouble it

takes to prepare them properly. And how about the matter of the nutritiousness of potato skins?"

Daniels says Simplot's own nutrition experts never have been convinced that potatoes baked in the skin contain significantly more nutrition or vitamins than peeled, boiled potatoes or even properly fried potatoes.

"But I know some million-dollar women are convinced the spud baked in its skin is much better for their children's health and we're not about to try to change their minds," he added.

Singer regains her voice after 7 years

United Press International
HOLLYWOOD — Singer Connie Francis calls it a miracle — the way she finally snapped out of a 7-year trauma she suffered after being raped.

In November 1974 the dark-haired singer was raped in her motel room on Long Island after a performance at the Westbury Music Fair. The assault was to have a far-reaching and devastating effect on Francis.

She went into deep depression that eventually led to a divorce from her husband, Joe Garizzi, and became paranoid about appearing in public. She was also

physically incapable of singing before an audience.

There followed a lengthy, publicly humiliating court battle. Francis sued the Howard Johnson motel chain for damages and eventually collected \$2.6 million.

"I was physically and emotionally unable to go on with my career," Francis said.

"I suffered from a morbid fear of audiences. Every time I looked into a crowd I saw the face of the man who raped me. And I hated the feeling that when people thought of me it was in terms of the girl who was raped."

"All of my life before the rape, the fun and enjoyment was negated. The rape became an obsession. I couldn't think of anything else."

Francis soon became a recluse, seeing only close friends. She would take to her bed for two or three months at a time.

Even the adoption of an infant son a month after the rape failed to change the downward course of the singer's life.

Yet, she began working to help

other rape and crime victims. She associated herself with the Crime Victims' Compensation Board in New Jersey. She appeared on public service television spots for rape victims and spoke to individuals who had survived similar experiences.

"Three and a half years after the rape I tried to get my career going again," Francis said. "I went to England and did an awful live show. I didn't sound like myself. And I cut a couple of albums. It took me 20 takes per song whereas I used to click them right off. The albums were just fair."

"One of my problems was a nasal condition caused by air-conditioned clubs and theaters. It destroyed my resonance and vibrato."

"So in January of 1977 I underwent an operation. It made my condition worse. I couldn't sing at all. The only thing I'd been sure of all my life was my voice. And now I'd lost that."

"My world fell apart. If it hadn't been for my son, Joey, and my parents, I'd have committed suicide."

"I was in complete depression."

And I had to live with the memory of the trial which became a carnival. It was a terrible ordeal. They asked horrible questions about my marital sex life.

"It contributed to the breakup of our marriage. My husband — we are friends now — just couldn't handle all of that invasion of privacy."

After the operation, Francis could barely sing.

She said she spent thousands of dollars on specialists, most of whom told her she would never sing again because of the damage incurred during the nasal operation. She abandoned hope of ever resurrecting her career.

"I didn't know what I was going to do," Francis continued. "Then eight days ago I was talking to a man I date about the whole ordeal of the rape and operation and I began to cry. I just broke down and the floodgates opened."

"It was the first time I'd ever cried about the rape, really let my feelings go. I also wept about the trial, the operation and the murder of my brother, George, last May. The man I was with was very empathetic."

"The next day I was walking

down a New York street and I began to sing quietly to myself. The song was 'What I Did For Love.' I hadn't had the range, even attempt after the operation."

"I was with the same man stopped walking and told him I can sing!"

"Then I got into my car and turned on the stereo tape of an album I'd recorded 10 years ago. And I sang along with it. My voice was as good or better than what I'd done the recording."

"It wasn't a gradual improvement. It was instant. It was magical. I swear it was a miracle. All of a sudden my voice was back. I'm a religious girl, but I believe in God now."

"I stopped the car and telephoned my father and my manager. I told my manager to book me back in the Westbury Music Fair. And he did. It'll be opening Nov. 12. It's my way of overcoming my fear of the rape."

"I know it's paranoid, but I have two bodyguards with me. And I'll drive home two hours every night rather than stay in a motel. But I'm really happy and elated. I can sing again. And I work again!"

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