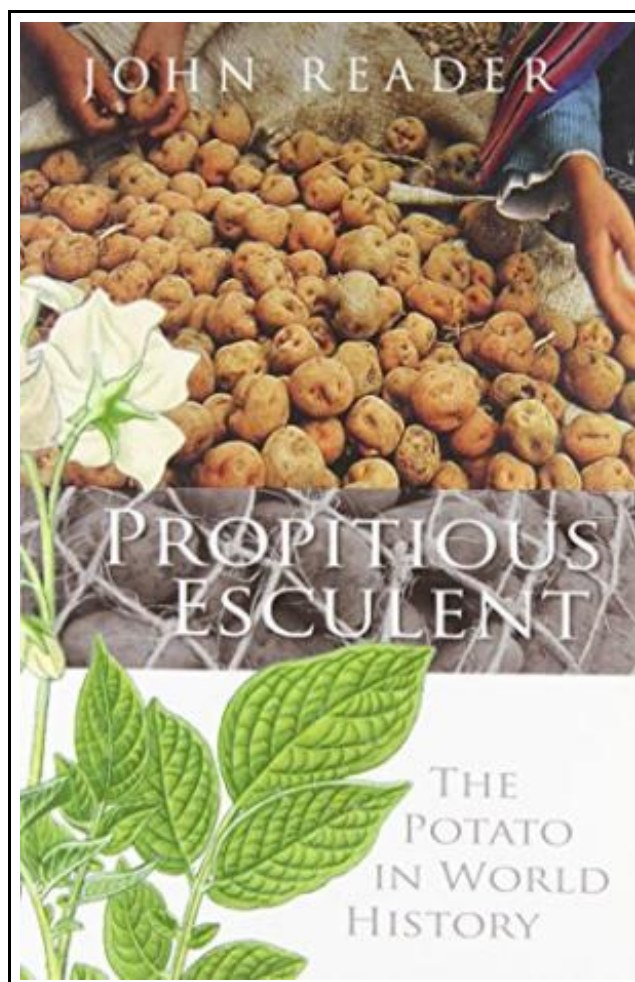


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Cornerstone, United Kingdom, 2008. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 228 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Baked, Roast, Boiled, Mashed, Steamed, French-Fried. We've probably all tried one or other type, and some of us eat them every day. The potato is one of the most familiar and ubiquitous foods, and part of our sense of humble, even mundane normality. Couch Potato. Cheap as Chips. Mr Potato Head. But the story of the *solanum tuberosum* is darker - one of struggle, disease, dirt and survival. Before domestication thousands of years ago, high up on the Andean antiplano, the high alkaloid content of potatoes made them poisonous to humans. But since then, these perfectly formed bundles of nutrition - naturally fat free, consisting mainly of energy giving carbohydrate, but containing protein and half of your RDA of Vitamin C and potassium - have been grown safely and cheaply underground in almost any weather and soil conditions, helping to fuel industrial revolution and population explosions. But their efficiency and versatility have also led to over-reliance and tragedy - most devastatingly, in Ireland. John Reader follows the potato's fascinating journey, from its origins and evolution in the Andes to its slightly mysterious arrival in Europe, where it became, in Britain, Ireland and throughout Europe, a crucial part of our gastronomic and social fabric. 2008 has been designated International Year of the Potato by the UN, and as global population swells and famine remains a constant risk, Reader asks what role the spud still has to play. *Propitious Esculent* is a highly readable exploration of the biology, history and social influence of our most humble, versatile foodstuff.

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