Fabulous Papas of Peru

Peru is the home of the *papa* (pah-PAH). No, in Peru, *papas* aren't dads. They are potatoes! They first grew in the Andes mountain range. More than 3,800 varieties of potatoes can be found in Peru. They have all colors of skin—black, red, and yellow. Some are speckled. Some are skinny. Almost everyone in Peru eats potatoes, because they are easy to grow and inexpensive. They even grow on the coldest mountain peaks. When missionaries walk down the streets in Lima, they smell potatoes simmered with spicy peppers and onions. Food carts sell this and many other delicious favorites. You can make *papas* at home.

What You Need

4 medium potatoes
½ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup thinly sliced red pepper (hot or mild)
¼ cup thinly sliced onion
⅓ cup evaporated milk
4 ounces cream cheese
1 cup chopped queso fresco (farmer's cheese)
   or Colby-jack cheese
2 slices of fresh or jarred jalapeno peppers
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon fresh cilantro *(optional)*

Make it a meal by adding in some crumbled chorizo sausage!

What You Do

1. Wash the potatoes.
2. Boil the potatoes in a pot of water for 20 minutes. Drain and let cool slightly.
3. Slice the potatoes, onion, and red pepper.
4. Heat vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Toss the onions and peppers in the hot oil for 1 minute, then add in the sliced potatoes. Cook for 10 minutes, flipping often.
5. Sprinkle salt over the cooked potatoes and stir in.
6. Place the milk, cream cheese, queso fresco, jalapenos, and garlic in a food processor or blender. Pulse together until the ingredients are well-blended. Pour over the potatoes, place the lid on the skillet, and let the potatoes and cheese sauce simmer together for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In Peru, people eat this dish cold on a piece of lettuce with boiled eggs and olives on top.

Q: How do clams call their friends?
A: On shell phones.

Q: What did the potato say when his mother told him their family was from South America?
A: Peru-v it!