

Potato Power.

The Skagit Valley is a beautifully dreamy green valley located between the Cascade Mountains and the Puget Sound. It is very close to the border with Canada, and right next to the West Coast. I went there a few months ago with my husband, as he had a business meeting with some potato growers. We drove along miles of tree-lined coastal roads, and finally came to a large, flat, lush valley that is farmland. It was cooler and more moist than Wenatchee. There was a consistent breeze coming from the ocean, and everywhere you looked was green. As we drove along, I tried my best* to take photos of the shady lanes and coastal views with my cell phone, but as with many photos, they do not do the beauty of the landscape justice*. We finally arrived at Wallace Farms. It is located in a fairly remote part of the valley: there's not much else around other than potatoes and more potatoes. As this was a business meeting, I decided not to sit in with my husband and his fellow company workers, as I would certainly be the odd one out*. So, I hung out* in the vestibule, and read all about the Wallaces. The family originally came from Scotland. They settled in Ireland, where they grew potatoes on the rolling hills of the far West coast, overlooking the Atlantic. In the 1800's they immigrated to Skagit Valley, and put their farming experience into practice. This particular area of the country is one of the best in the world for raising potatoes. The climate is mild and moist; the land is rich, and there is no lack of water. These happen to be the best conditions for growing this root vegetable. And they do it well. Their farm produces rich, healthy varieties with very smooth skins. The colors range anywhere from very white, to bright red, and to deep purple. They grow conventionally and also organically. I browsed through the well-known Costco recipe magazine, and Wallace potatoes were recommended for several recipes. Having a mention from Costco is like having a stamp of approval put on their product. As I waited for the meeting to finish, I thought about how popular potatoes are. Let's face it, everybody loves them. Have you ever met anyone who doesn't? And think how their use has spread from central America to the rest of the world. The simple potato is quite grand, if you think about it. And the high quality ones produce a lot of business.

Related vocabulary and expressions: to try one's best, to do something justice, to be the odd one out, to hang out.

1. He tried his best to fix the car, but it was too worn out to be repaired.
2. That photo doesn't do her justice; she's far more beautiful in person.
3. They all knew about knitting, and I don't know anything about it; I really felt like the odd one out.
4. While I see the dentist, you can hang out in the waiting room.

