

CHAPTER
20

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: MOVEMENT

The Potato Impacts the World

Section 4

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

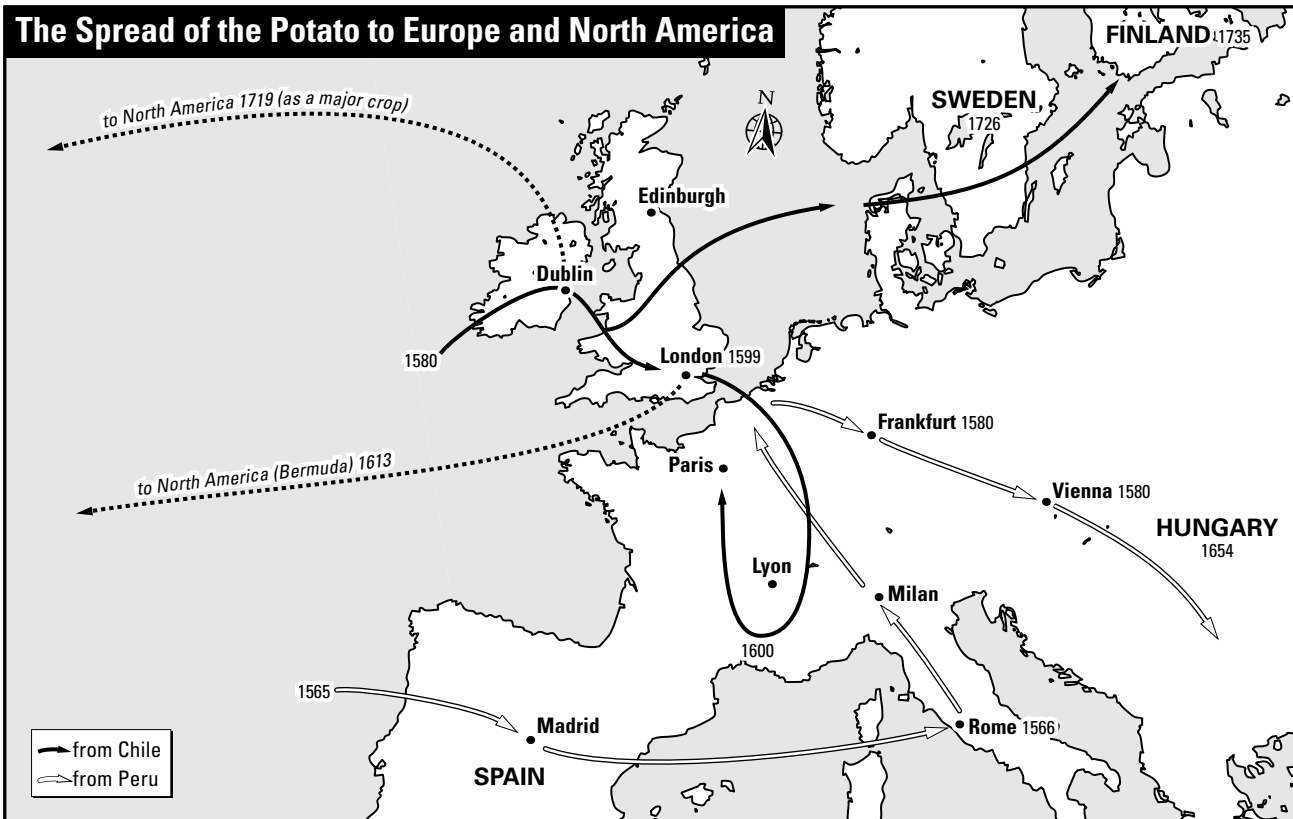
The spread of the white potato over 400 years ago revolutionized the world's food supply. One writer even went so far as to proclaim that the planting of the first white potatoes in Europe "probably changed more lives than the deeds of a hundred kings."

In the mid-1500s, Spanish explorers discovered the Inca growing white potatoes in the Andes Mountains of modern-day Peru and Chile and brought the plant to Europe. Even though there was some resistance to eating potatoes for the next 200 years, eventually the white potato became the world's most widely grown vegetable. The potato was a cheap source of valuable proteins, vitamins, and minerals. This may account for the rapid growth of the European population after 1700.

In the United States, the common white potato is known as the Irish potato. Its official introduction

to North America came in 1613 when a shipment from England reached Bermuda, an island about 500 miles east of present-day North Carolina. Eight years later the governor of Bermuda sent a chest filled with potatoes to the governor of the Virginia colony. Yet potatoes did not find wide-spread acceptance on the continent. Potatoes were then reintroduced to the United States in 1719. In that year several Irish immigrants brought potatoes to New Hampshire, and the vegetable finally took hold. It eventually became almost a daily item on American dinner menus.

Today corn and potatoes are the two main vegetable crops in the United States. An acre of potatoes yields almost twice as much food as an acre of grain. This permits the United States to produce around 400 million bags of potatoes annually.



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Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. What do the arrows on the map represent? _____

Why are there two different arrow styles? _____

2. What European country was first introduced to the potato? _____

The potatoes that arrived in Dublin came from which Andean region? _____

3. Trace the route that the potato took to reach Vienna. _____

What is significant about the year that Vienna got the potato? _____

4. Did the potato reach London or Paris first? _____

5. Which of the European countries shown on the map was last to receive the potato? _____

6. How long did it take for the potato to get from London to the south of France and from Madrid to Rome? _____

7. Explain what the arrow leading from London toward North America represents. _____

8. Why do you think the common white potato is known as the Irish potato in the United States? _____
