

Salt-Crusted Potatoes with Cilantro Mojo

I am super fortunate to live with two open-minded eaters. They not only put up with my kitchen experiments, they fully participate with suggestions and ideas (sometimes a few more than I am prepared for!). So, when my husband holds up a gorgeous, salt-crusted potato on his fork and declares it perfect, I take him seriously. Allow me to share this delightfully simple, “perfect” potato dish (by the way, there was not one morsel left at the end of the meal).

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 pounds small, evenly sized waxy new potatoes, such as fingerling or creamers, scrubbed but unpeeled
- Sea salt flakes
- 3 large garlic cloves, roughly chopped (or shallots)
- 1 green chili pepper, seeded and chopped (half a serrano)
- Leaves from a bunch of fresh cilantro, roughly chopped (and an equal amount of basil)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground cumin seeds
- 3/4 cup toasted, unsalted pistachios
- Scant 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons white wine vinegar, Muscatel if possible (or lemon or lime juice)
- Himalayan salt to taste

Directions

1. Put the potatoes into a wide, shallow pan in which they fit in a single layer. Add 2 tablespoons salt and 1 quart cold water (just enough to cover), bring to a boil, and leave to boil rapidly until the water has evaporated. Then turn the heat to low and continue to

cook for a few minutes, gently turning the potatoes over occasionally, until they are dry and the skins are wrinkled and covered in a thin crust of salt.

2. While the potatoes are cooking, make the cilantro mojo. Put the garlic, green chili pepper, and 1 teaspoon salt in a mortar, and pound into a paste. Add the cilantro leaves, and pound until they are incorporated into the paste. Add the cumin, and gradually mix in the oil to make a smooth sauce. Just before serving, add the vinegar, and spoon into a small bowl.
3. Pile the hot potatoes onto a plate and serve with the mojo, instructing your guests to rub off as much salt from the potatoes as they wish before dipping them in the sauce.

Enjoy!

Adapted from Jose Pizarro's recipe.

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