

Sweet Potatoes with Coconut and Macadamia Nuts

We have all observed a steady evolution of holiday side dishes over the past decades, and sweet potatoes are no exception to the rule. For good reason, most of these evolutions have cut out the refined sugars and dairy products, increasing the use of whole, fresh vegetables. Especially if your holiday memories are of sweet potato pie, spoon bread and baked canned “yams” with marshmallows (like mine are), the recipes were certainly well deserving of a healthy makeover.

Today I’ll be sharing a yummy replacement for sweet potato casseroles, but first, let’s take a look at what you might encounter in the produce section while shopping this season.

No longer just a seasonal vegetable that makes its appearance each fall, sweet potatoes have become a staple in many plant-based kitchens, including mine. If you are shopping at a Whole Foods, farmers market or local co-op you will surely come across a nice variety of options. Like all root vegetables, I suggest you go for organic, but when it comes to color the choice it is up to you!

Here is Saveur magazine’s shopping guide to 16 shades of sweet potato. As quite the fan of this humble veg, I have tried nearly all of the 16 and certainly have my favorites. Top of my shopping list would be Hannah’s, Garnets, Okinawa and Stokes Purple, but trust me all are worth a try and delicious!

Heidi Swanson has never failed me with her 101 Cookbook blog when it comes to top notch recipes, and this simple, seven-ingredient version of whipped, baked sweet potatoes is a crowd-pleaser for sure.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes (of course I tried many varieties, and the purple is both eye-catching and yummy)
- 1/3 cup coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon fine-grain sea salt
- 1/3 cup raw, unsweetened grated coconut
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or melted butter
- 1/3 cup toasted macadamia nuts, chopped

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Coat 6 ramekins or a single medium-sized casserole dish with oil.
2. Scrub each potato, rub with a bit of salt and place directly in the oven for 60-90 minutes, until baked through. Remove from the oven, let cool for a few minutes, and cut each sweet potato in half. Scrape the flesh into a medium mixing bowl. You should have about three cups of sweet potatoes. Mash the sweet potatoes with coconut milk. If your sweet potatoes are on the fibrous side, puree them. Stir in ginger, maple syrup and salt. Let sit for a few minutes, stir again and taste, adjusting seasoning as desired.
3. Spoon the sweet potato mixture into dishes, sprinkle with coconut, drizzle with olive oil and bake uncovered until warm and golden, about 25 – 35 minutes. Remove and sprinkle with toasted macadamia nuts.

Enjoy!

Adapted from 101 Cookbooks

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