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Slow Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Garlic Labneh

Naturally Delicious Recipes • Janice Feuer-Haugen

INCREDIBLY SWEET, TENDER & SIMPLY DELICIOUS!

An almost effortless recipe for amazing sweet potatoes. And a complete contrast from the hot oven method we've all used to roast sweet potatoes. Game changing actually, the way long, slow roasting at 275° enhances both the sweetness and texture of sweet potatoes. Israeli chef and restaurateur Michael Solomonov developed *Slow Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Garlic Labneh* (strained yogurt) after being inspired by a meal he enjoyed in Tel Aviv. Lucky for the rest of us, he's shared his inspiration.

SLOW ROASTED TO PERFECTION

Saveur Magazine explains that slow roasting “will convert more starches into sugars and caramelize more of those sugars for deeper browned flavor.”

SUPER SPUDS

Although usually associated with Thanksgiving, nutrient- and fiber-rich sweet potatoes deserve a place on our plate throughout the year.

Based on their nutritional profile, sweet potatoes are considered by many to be one of the most healthful food choices we can make.

For example, one medium sweet potato provides over 200 percent of our daily vitamin A requirement in the form of beta-carotene. All this vitamin A can benefit our eyesight, skin and bones, plus, assists in preventing infections in our lungs, digestive and urinary tracts.

Along with vitamin A, comes vitamin C, copper, vitamin B6, iron, calcium, potassium and manganese. Do eat the skin of organic sweet potatoes for it alone has over 10 times the antioxidant power of the tender, sweet flesh inside.

EVEN IF THE SIGN SAYS “YAMS” —THEY'RE SWEET POTATOES

“In most U.S. groceries, you should assume that you are always purchasing a sweet potato, even if the sign says ‘yams.’ Over 1 million sweet potatoes are commercially grown in the U.S. each year, while commercial production of yams in the U.S. is rare.” —WorldsHealthiestFoods.org

- In the 1950s red-skinned, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes were introduced to Americans as “yams.” Commercial growers thought this name would help distinguish them from the white-



skinned, white-fleshed sweet potatoes consumers already knew.

- This worked for a while. Then, knowledgeable cooks learned about real yams, which are not even botanically related. Native to Africa and Asia, yams can weigh over 100 pounds with starchier and drier flesh than the misnamed orange-fleshed U.S. sweet potatoes.
- The real difference between these two varieties of sweet potatoes has to do with their texture when cooked.
- In the U.S., “yams” refers to the soft, moist, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes; whereas, the dryer, firmer and white-fleshed ones are labeled as sweet potatoes. But in truth, they're both sweet potatoes. ■

Recipe on next page...

Slow Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Garlic Labneh

Ignore the temptation to raise the oven temperature. Long, slow roasting results in incredibly sweet, tender and rich sweet potatoes. The tart labneh (strained yogurt) with garlic contrasts perfectly with their enhanced sweetness.

Serve *Slow Roasted Sweet Potatoes* as a delicious and satisfying vegetarian main course. Add a side of green vegetables and/or a salad for a complete meal. Do plan ahead, though, as it takes 2½ hours to slow roast sweet potatoes to perfection.

This recipe is lightly adapted from a recipe by Michael Solomonov of Zahav Restaurant in Philadelphia, PA.

Makes 2 servings

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 3 hours

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium sweet potatoes (about ¾ pound each)
- 1 ½ teaspoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 8 twists freshly ground pepper
- ¼ teaspoon fennel or dill seeds

Garlic Labneh (Strained Yogurt)

- 1 cup whole milk plain yogurt
- ½ teaspoon garlic pressed through a garlic press
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

DIRECTIONS

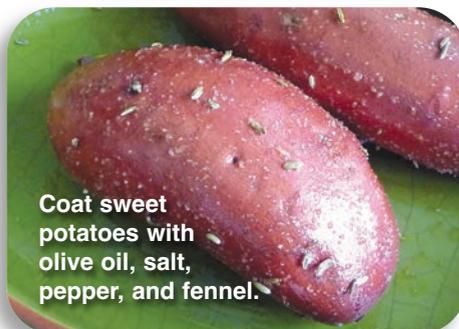
1) **PREPARE THE LABNEH.** Wrap the yogurt in 6–8 layers of culinary grade cheesecloth. Place it in a sieve over a bowl to catch the whey.



Tying up the labneh in cheesecloth

2) **PREPARE THE SWEET POTATOES.** Heat the oven to 275 degrees. Line a rimmed baking pan with aluminum foil.

3) Wash and dry the sweet potatoes. Place them on a large plate or in a baking dish. Coat the sweet potatoes with the olive oil, salt, pepper and fennel seeds. Place the sweet potatoes on the foil-lined pan at least an inch apart from one another.



Coat sweet potatoes with olive oil, salt, pepper, and fennel.

4) Bake the sweet potatoes 2½ hours until the juices have caramelized beneath the potatoes and the insides are very soft. Remove the sweet potatoes from the oven and let them rest for 10 minutes before serving them.



Soft inside, caramelized on the bottom!

5) **PREPARE THE GARLIC LABNEH.** After the sweet potatoes have roasted for 2 hours, combine the pressed garlic and salt in a small bowl. Use your hands to squeeze the cheese cloth, removing as much whey as you can from the yogurt to create labneh. Unwrap the cheesecloth. Measure out ½ cup of the strained yogurt and stir it into the bowl with the garlic and salt. Refrigerate any excess labneh for another use.

6) Once the sweet potatoes have rested, transfer them to individual plates or a serving platter. Use a sharp knife to split the top of each of the sweet potatoes. Use a fork to open the potatoes, exposing their gorgeous orange insides.

7) Serve *Slow-Roasted Sweet Potatoes* with a dollop of *Garlic Labneh*. Garnish with a sprinkling of thinly sliced scallion.

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