

Recipes included at this site do not appear in
A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

September 2016

SWEETPOTATOES, MORE UNUSUAL MENU IDEAS:

**Yam and Onion Grill
with Piquant and Sweet Barbecue Sauce**

Sweetpotatoes in Curried Coconut Sauce

Sweetpotato, Kale, Tomato *Frittata* with Goat Cheese

Latin American Sweetpotato and Rice Pudding

Some forty recipes using sweetpotatoes, from appetizers to desserts, have been included in *A Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*. They come from countries all over the world, countries that were introduced to this New World tuber by the explorers and subsequent traders. Sweetpotatoes are enormously popular in

Asia and in Africa. I remember well the day I brought home a dozen or so sweetpotatoes. My husband was astonished and, of course, wondered why we needed so many sweetpotatoes. “We’re testing a dozen or so African recipes,” I explained.

We are confident that sweetpotatoes were domesticated in Mesoamerica between 5000-4000 BC but it appears from evidence found at a Peruvian archeological site that it may have been used for food in Peru as early as 8000 BC. Today only about three percent of the world’s supply is grown in the Western Hemisphere where the journey of the sweetpotato began and where the per capita consumption is about six and a half pounds



compared to a per capita consumption in Asia of about sixty-four pounds. Asian demand has turned this crop into a major agricultural export product; eight-one percent of the world’s demand is grown in China. There is evidence that the sweetpotato was growing in Polynesia around 1000 AD, before it could have been introduced by explorers and traders. This strongly indicates a very early contact that, as yet, has not been confirmed by corroborating evidence. The old explanation that such foods were introduced to the islands of the Pacific in the guano of sea birds does not apply in this case since sweetpotatoes are not grown from seeds but are asexually propagated by cuttings.

World agricultural statistics reveal that the sweet, dark orange tubers with sweet, moist flesh, which we call yams, are favored by North Americans and Australians, but by few others. The name yam was given to this variety in the 1930s by a Louisiana ad agency. True yams are a starchy tuber of Old World, not New World, origin which is scaly, hairy, a member of the genus *Discorea*, and not at all sweet. The dry, pale-skinned variety, known as sweetpotatoes, is the preference of most, especially in Asia and in Africa and for some recipes, I too prefer the starchy, less sweet taste.

You may have noticed that I use one word when referring to the root of *Ipomoea batatas*. Sweetpotatoes are members of the Convolvulaceae, the family of the Morning Glory; it is not a potato, which is a member of the nightshade family. It is not uncommon for restaurant servers to ask if you want potatoes as a side with your meal. It is also not uncommon for them to then ask, “white or sweet?” The concept of white vs. sweet potato has not taken hold in New Zealand where it is called by



sweetpotato flower, *Ipomoea batatas*.
botanical family – Convolvulaceae



potato flower, *Solanum tuberosum*
botanical family - Solanaceae

its Maori name, *kumara*, nor in Sri Lanka where it is known as *bathala*. In the Philippines and in Peru it is called *camote* while it is *boniato* to the Spanish and the Uruguayans. This is the reason I use one word for sweetpotato; it is not a sweet potato. And, I am tenacious as a terrier about the difference between these two roots and about encouraging the more appropriate use of a one word name for this wonderful, versatile vegetable.

YAM AND ONION GRILL

TPT - 3 hours and 13 minutes;

2 hours = marination period

Again, the challenge of addressing the picnic scene as a vegetarian resulted in creativity. We often picnicked with friends and colleagues in the summer and even trotted the marinated vegetables to a park or the beach, always bringing enough to share. Just as long as you could put something on the grill with everybody else, "it was cool." The wonderfully flavorful sauce, that I use for basting in this recipe, makes everyday vegetables and burgers taste really special when summer heat has "beat up on" taste buds. It is not dull but we have always thought it to be a comfort food.

BARBECUE SAUCE #1

—PIQUANT AND SWEET*:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 medium onion—*finely* chopped
1 large garlic clove—*finely* chopped

1/2 cup commercially-available chili sauce
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup honey
2 tablespoons *vegetarian* Worcestershire Sauce *or*
HOMEMADE VEGAN WORCESTERSHIRE-
STYLE SAUCE **
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

2 pounds long yams *or* sweetpotatoes of as uniform diameter
as possible
2 quarts *boiling* water

2 large Spanish onions—sliced crosswise into 1/2-inch rounds

In a saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, combine oil, *finely* chopped onion and garlic. Sauté until onion is soft and translucent, *allowing neither the onion nor the garlic to brown.*

Add ketchup, apple cider vinegar, honey, Worcestershire Sauce, lemon juice, dry mustard, and ground ginger. Simmer, stirring frequently, for about 15 minutes.

Peel yams and slice crosswise or diagonally into 1/2-inch slices. Drop into *boiling* water and boil for 10-15 minutes, or until *crisp-tender*. Drain thoroughly and rinse with *cold* water to stop further cooking.

Arrange parboiled yam slices close together in a 10-inch pie plate or other shallow dish. Pour 1 cupful of the prepared barbecue sauce over.

Arrange onion slices on top. Allow to marinate for at least 2 hours. Turn once to make sure that all surfaces come in contact with the marinade.

Prepare a moderately hot charcoal fire of *glowing coals*.***

Grill marinated vegetables 4-6 inches above coals, turning as required.**** Baste often with remaining sauce.

Transfer to heated platter for serving.

Serve at once.

Yields about 6 servings
adequate for 4 people

Notes: *The sauce, which is easily doubled when required, can be stored in a jar in the refrigerator for as much as 6 weeks.

**My recipe for this vegan Worcestershire-style sauce can be found in volume II, pages 683-84 of *A Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*.

***This dish may also be prepared under an oven broiler when outdoor cooking is not possible.

****A wire barbecue rack or "basket" with tightly closing handle makes turning the vegetables easy

When required, this recipe is can be halved or doubled.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 4.9 g.; FAT = 2.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 54.7 g.;
CALORIES = 246; CALORIES FROM FAT = 8%

**SWEETPOTATOES
WITH CURRIED COCONUT SAUCE**
Shakarkand Razgulla

TPT - 40 minutes

We like to serve this as a side dish for a Southeast Asian meal that includes dal or another lentil dish such as lentils masala or lentils with garlic or a highly seasoned dish like eggplant, lentil, and chili stew. I sometimes add the shredded leaves of Chinese broccoli, gey lan, or broccolini, a hybrid of broccoli and kai lan which grown year round in Arizona and California. The use of jalapeño chili sauce in this recipe is, perhaps, unorthodox, but we feel it allow greater control over the "heat" than do fresh chilies.

1 1/2 cups water
1 large garlic clove—very finely chopped
1 teaspoon curry powder*

1 teaspoon *garam masala* seasoning*
1/2 teaspoon grated fresh gingerroot
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon *jalapeño* chili sauce, or to taste

**2 medium sweetpotatoes, peeled and cut into
3/4-inch chunks**
3/4 cup *finely* chopped celery

1/2 *light, sulfite-free* coconut milk

1 organic lime—cut into 6 wedges

In a large skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine water, *very finely* chopped garlic and gingerroot, *garam masala*, salt, and *jalapeño* chili sauce. Allow to come to the boil. *Reduce heat to LOW-MEDIUM.*

Add chopped sweetpotato and celery. Cover and allow to simmer until tender—about 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Remove cover and allow to simmer and reduce for about 8 minutes more. *Reduce heat to LOW.*

Add coconut milk and cook, stirring constantly, for about 5 minutes more. Turn into a shallow, heated serving bowl.

Garnish with lime wedges. *Serve at once.*

Yield 6 servings
adequate for 4 people

Note: *If you prefer to make your own curry powder, it is quite easy to create a mixture to your own taste. See mine in *A Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul, Volume II*, p. 320. Use it as a starter and go from there. My favorite *garam masala* recipe can be found in volume I of my vegetarian journey on pp. 678-79.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.0 g.; FAT = 0.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 8.7 g.;
CALORIES = 45; CALORIES FROM FAT = 16 %

SWEETPOTATO, KALE, TOMATO *FRITTATA* WITH GOAT CHEESE

TPT - 16 minutes

There are few vegetables which Italians do not use in frittatas and there are few vegetables with which frittata lovers will not experiment. This fascinating combination is a case in point and it results in a truly divine frittata for a light summer evening's supper.

1 teaspoon butter
1 teaspoon *extra virgin* olive oil
3 shallot cloves—*finely* chopped
1/2 cup shredded sweetpotato
1 cup *finely* shredded and well-rinsed kale
1 small tomato—peeled, seeded, and diced

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Tiny pinch ground sweet marjoram

4 large eggs—well-beaten*
1/2 ounce goat cheese with honey—diced

**1 tablespoon grated (about 1/2 ounce) *pecorino*
Romano or Parmesan cheese, as preferred**

Preheat broiler to about 350 degrees F.

In a 9-inch skillet,** set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat butter and olive oil. Add *finely* chopped shallots, shredded sweetpotato, *finely* shredded kale, and *diced* tomato. Sauté until shallots are soft and vegetables are *crisp-tender*, allowing *neither the shallots nor the other vegetables to brown*.

Season with black pepper, and sweet marjoram. Stir.

Stir in beaten eggs and diced goat cheese, spreading evenly over pan surface. Cook, *undisturbed*, until set. Wrap pan handle with aluminum foil, if necessary, to protect it from burning. Sprinkle the *frittata* with grated cheese and place under preheated broiler until *lightly browned*. *Be careful not to scorch eggs*.

Slide out of skillet onto a heated round serving platter.

Serve *at once*, cut into wedges.

Yields 4-5 servings
adequate for 3-4 people

Notes: *Four eggs make a thin *frittata*, quite adequate for 3 people. This is easily increased proportionately as needed using the same 9-inch or a 10-inch skillet although it will require a longer cooking period and produce a thicker *frittata*.

**We use a non-stick-coated skillet which we further coat with a non-stick lecithin spray coating to facilitate the release of the *frittata* for serving.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 8.5 g.; FAT = 9.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 6.5 g.;
CALORIES = 125; CALORIES FROM FAT = 65%



LATIN AMERICAN SWEETPOTATO AND RICE PUDDING

Dulce de Comote y Arroz

TPT - about 3 hours and 48 minutes;
2 hours = refrigeration period

Another rice pudding? Yes, another rice pudding, but a very different one which may have originated among the indigenous peoples of Colombia!! At one time we just called this dessert “m–m–m–m–m pudding.” It is one of those sweet dishes that is whipped up in Latin America by homemakers and restaurants alike. Everybody knows it; everybody prepared a variation of their own; and nobody really knows the origins, other than “de me madre o de me nonna.”

2 1/2 cups skimmed milk
1 tablespoon brown rice or white converted rice,
if preferred

2 tablespoons corn starch
1/2 cup cold skimmed milk

1/4 cup sugar
1 small sweetpotato or yam—peeled and grated
2 tablespoons almond meal or finely ground
almonds

Light cream or half and half, if desired

In the top half of the double boiler set over *MEDIUM* heat, bring milk just to the boil. Stir in rice. Place double boiler inset over *simmering*, but *not boiling*, water and cook, covered, until rice is *very soft*—about 1 1/4 hours.

In the work bowl of the food processor, fitted with steel knife, or in the container of the electric blender, combine corn starch and *cold* milk. Process until the corn starch is in suspension. Add *hot* milk and cooked rice with sugar, grated sweetpotato or yam, and almond meal. Process until yam and rice are *uniformly chopped*, but *not pureed*.

Pour into a clean saucepan set over *LOW* heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the consistency is quite thick—about 20 minutes.

Apportion into individual serving dishes or into one large serving dish. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving to allow pudding to set.

Serve with cream, if desired.

Yields 4-5 servings
adequate for 4 people

Note: This recipe may be doubled, when required.

1/5 SERVING – PROTEIN = 5.9 g.; FAT = 3.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 28.4 g.;
CALORIES = 168; CALORIES FROM FAT = 19%

*Stop back again next month and I'll introduce you to
some very nutritious and satisfying casseroles with sweetpotatoes
from my files.*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.