

ROASTED POTATOES WITH GRUYERE

I don't know how you feel about potatoes, but for me they are the ultimate comfort food. Whether they are fried, mashed, boiled or drowned in a béchamel sauce in a gratin, they are a go-to side for almost any meal. Here's a simple roasted potato recipe with melted gruyere because, in my world, everything is better with cheese—especially potatoes.

INGREDIENTS

1 shallot, minced

1 clove of garlic, minced

1 pound small Yukon Gold potatoes, cleaned

4 tablespoons olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Gruyere, large grate

3 tablespoons fresh chives, minced

Kosher salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

Heat a small sauté pan and add one tablespoon of oil. Sauté the shallot and garlic for two to three minutes until fragrant. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Fill a large pasta pot half-way up with water. Add 1 tablespoon kosher salt. Bring water to a boil. Add potatoes and lower heat to a simmer. Cover and cook for 20 minutes.

Drain potatoes. Place in a baking dish large enough to make one layer of potatoes. Don't crowd the potatoes. Using the back of a large spoon, press each potato down until the skin cracks and they are slightly flattened. Drizzle the olive oil

over the potatoes and season with salt and pepper. Add the shallots and garlic. Using a large spoon, gently stir potatoes until all ingredients are mixed well together.

Place in oven and bake for 15 minutes. Take pan out of oven and turn the potatoes over. Place back in oven and bake for another 15 minutes.

Take pan out of the oven and sprinkle the cheese on top. Place back in oven for two to three minutes until the cheese is melted, but not burned.

Remove from oven and garnish with chives.

BEET AND BLUE CHEESE SALAD

Once summer is a distant memory, my salads tend to be a bit on the dull side. So for those dark, dreary days, I've realized it's important to add a little color and zing to my food. This salad not only brightens up a meal, but it's a real crowd pleasure too. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS: (Serves 6)

FOR THE SALAD:

One head butter lettuce

2 small cooked beets (or one large one)

1 small can mandarin oranges, juice drained and reserved

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled blue cheese

FOR THE DRESSING:

2 tablespoons reserved mandarin orange juice

3 tablespoons oil

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

To cook beets, wash them and place in medium sized pot. Add water to cover. Bring to a boil, and then down to a simmer. Simmer for 45-60 minutes depending upon size. They are done once you can stick a fork in them easily. Turn off heat and allow to cool. Drain and remove skin. Best to use gloves so your hands don't get stained. Cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes. Set aside.

To make dressing, whisk together all ingredients until combined.

Rinse lettuce and dry. Tear into small pieces and place in large bowl. Add beets, mandarin oranges and blue cheese. Pour on dressing and lightly toss.

SEAFOOD STEW

Now that the weather is getting cooler, I'm embracing my inner soup and stew desires. If my memory was better, I'd remember what was the inspiration for this dish, but somehow it has escaped me. No matter, what I do remember is that this dish is delicious, hearty and satisfying. It's great to serve on a cold, rainy night with a nice bottle of sauvignon blanc at the ready.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

8 clams

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound hake

10 large shrimp

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup slivered almonds

4 tablespoons olive oil

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 small loaf crusty sourdough bread*

1 vidalia onion, thinly sliced

1 14.5 oz can lobster corn chowder**

1 cup of white wine

$\frac{1}{2}$ - cup water

8 small potatoes, thinly sliced

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon saffron threads

Salt and pepper to taste

*(*NOTE: If your bread comes packaged in a plastic bag, it may not be as crusty as it can be. Simply take it out of its package and leave on the counter for an hour or two before you begin this dish. Exposing it to air should harden the crust.)*

*(**NOTE: I used Bay Harbor Lobster Corn Chowder, but feel free to use any canned chowder)*

PREPARATION

Rinse the clams, devein and clean shrimp, and cut the hake

into four pieces. If the hake is very thick, butterfly first, and then cut into 4 equal pieces. Place in separate bowls and set aside in the refrigerator.

Using a large skillet, toast the almonds until they begin to brown, about two to three minutes. Place in a large bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to the pan and sauté the sliced garlic for about one minute until fragrant and starting to brown. Using a slotted spoon, remove the garlic and add to the bowl with the almonds.

Slice four $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces of bread. Cut them into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes and add to the skillet. Stir them a bit and allow to brown, about 2 minutes. Add to the bowl with the almonds and garlic and set aside.

In the same skillet, add two more tablespoons of olive oil. Sauté the onions until they begin to brown, about 8 minutes. Add the minced garlic and sauté until fragrant, about another minute. Add the lobster corn chowder, wine and water. Add in the sliced potatoes, saffron, salt and pepper. Bring up to a low boil, cover, then lower the heat and simmer for about 15 minutes until the potatoes are soft.

Using a blender or food processor, pulse the almond/garlic/bread mixture one or two times. You want it chunky, not small crumbs.

Once the potatoes are tender, add in the almond/garlic/bread mixture and stir. Place the clams evenly around the pan with the side that will open facing up. Cover and cook for about six minutes until the clams begin to open. Stir in the shrimp and then, place the 4 pieces of hake gently on top. Cover and cook for an additional 8 minutes.

Slice the remaining loaf of bread into $\frac{1}{2}$ -pieces. Brush with olive oil and lightly season with garlic salt. Place slices on sheet pan and broil in oven for about 1-minute until the edges start to brown. Flip the pieces over and broil for another

minute until the edges start to brown.

Spoon out into bowls and serve with a slice of bread on the side.

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