

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.

<https://shop.barharborfoods.com/product/lobstercornchowder/>

TRUFFLE PASTA

Whenever I'm in midtown Manhattan, I always love to walk downtown a bit before heading into the subway on my way home. Naturally, I can't help myself, so I stop into all the different gourmet shops and markets along the way. One of my favorites is Eataly, and I love walking through their pasta section and picking up something new to test out at home. This week, Truffle Pasta* was on sale, so I gave it a whirl with a duck sausage and mushroom ragu. It was delicious!

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 lb of truffle pasta*

3 Tablespoons olive oil

1 red onion, thinly sliced

1 shallot, thinly sliced

8 cremini mushrooms, sliced

3 cloves of garlic, minced

2 links of cooked duck sausage, sliced (or sub-in cooked sausage of your choice)

1 cup grated parmesan cheese (small grate)

2 whole eggs, 2 yolks

2 teaspoons truffle paste*

Salt, pepper and red pepper flakes to taste

Chives for garnish

PREPARATION:

In a large pot, boil water. Follow the package instructions for cooking the pasta. Save at least one cup of the pasta water.

While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Sauté the red onion and shallot until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook for 2 – 3 minutes. Add a splash more oil if too dry. Add in garlic and sausage and cook for one more minute. Season with salt, pepper and red pepper flakes to taste.

□ In a small bowl, whisk the whole eggs and yolks together until blended. Add the truffle paste, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Parmesan cheese, a pinch of salt and pepper, and stir until the ingredients are well mixed. Set aside.

Remove the pasta from the boiling water using a pasta spoon with teeth and add to the mushroom mixture in the skillet. Keeping the heat on low, gently fold together. Add in the egg mixture and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the pasta water. Fold all together. It's okay if the eggs seem to scramble a bit.

□ Taste it and if the pasta seems too dry, continue to add more pasta water a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time until the sauce comes to a consistency you like, being careful not to make it too watery.

□ Plate the pasta in shallow bowls and garnish with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the parmesan cheese and chives. Serve immediately.

*(*Note – Truffle pasta and truffle paste are easily available on-line for purchase.)*

PORT TONIC

As sad as I am to say goodbye to summer, it seems only right to send it off with a refreshing cocktail. I started drinking these while visiting Portugal. It's a lovely apéritif to enjoy while deciding whether to order the bacalhau or the grilled sardines. It is a takeoff on a gin and tonic with white port replacing the gin. Saúde!

(NOTE: Normally the glass would be filled to the top, but "someone" might have sampled a bit too much before the photo was taken. Just saying...)

INGREDIENTS (1 serving)

2 ounces dry white port

6 ounces tonic water

1 slice orange

1 slice lemon

Ice

Mint for garnish

PREPARATION:

Fill a large goblet or wine glass with ice, stir to chill the glass, strain out water, leave the ice. Take a slice of lemon, then a slice of orange, press and smear them around the inside

of the glass. Give each a squeeze to release the juice and drop inside the glass.

Add port, and then tonic. Stir lightly. Enjoy!

GRILLED BROCCOLINI

I'm not a huge fan of broccoli, but somehow, these baby broccolis taste different to me—particularly when I grill them. This is a simple side dish that can be served as is, or with your favorite dip or salad dressing. Tzatziki or a red pepper puree would work great.

INGREDIENTS (serves 3-4)

¼ cup sliced almonds

1 lb broccolini

Olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION:

Place the almonds in a dry skillet and toast them, shaking the pan so that they flip over. You want them lightly browned and not burnt.

Rinse and dry the broccolini. Place on a baking sheet. Brush each spear all over with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat your grill to 375 degrees. Place the broccolini spears directly on the grates over the heat. Grill until the spears start to char, about five minutes on each side.

Place on a platter and garnish with the toasted almonds.

TURKEY BURGER WITH CHEESE ON A PORTOBELLO BUN

If you're looking for ways to lighten your meals without giving up on some of your favorite summer dishes, try this turkey burger. Turkey meat is a lower fat and cholesterol option than beef and with the right ingredients mixed in, you might not even notice that much of a difference. And rather than a bread bun, I like to use portobello mushrooms to cradle the burger. Topped with cheese, pickles and bbq sauce, it's hard to beat. Now you'll have more room for dessert!

INGREDIENTS (serves 6)

FOR BURGERS:

1 lb chopped turkey meat

3 links sweet turkey sausage

1 tablespoon of your favorite spice mix

1 tablespoon of your favorite bbq sauce

1 teaspoon of your favorite hot sauce

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fresh ground pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ lb Gruyere, cut into slices

Pickles for garnish

BBQ sauce for drizzle

FOR MUSHROOMS:

6 portobello mushrooms, cleaned and stem removed (*NOTE: Don't drown in water. I just use a damp paper towel to brush off any dirt*).

Olive oil for brushing

Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine turkey and sausage meats, spice mix, bbq sauce, hot sauce, salt and pepper. Using a large wooden spoon or your hands, combine until all the ingredients are well distributed.

Separate the meat mixture into 6 even balls. I like to use a large round cookie cutter (about 4") to press the balls into an even patty shape. Place the patties on an oiled plate.

Brush the portobello mushrooms with olive oil and season with salt and pepper on both sides. Place on a separate plate.

Oil your grill grates. Heat the grill to 375 degrees. Place the burgers on direct heat for 4-5 minutes. Flip and continue to grill for an additional 4-5 minutes (depending upon thickness). You want the patties to feel firm to the touch, with a little give in the center. For the last minute, place the cheese on top so it can melt.

While the burgers are grilling, place the portobello mushrooms on the grill, direct heat for 2 minutes each side. Keep an eye on them. If they cook too fast, just remove from grill, allowing whatever liquid accumulated to drip off.

To serve, place a portobello top side down on a plate. Place the burger on top. Garnish with pickles and a drizzle of bbq

sauce.

NO MAYO COLESLAW

Every year we have a big block party and I always like to bring something that goes with hotdogs and hamburgers. Because everything sits out for hours, I can't make my usual coleslaw because it has mayo. Here's a vinegar-based recipe with a tangy dressing. It's best to bring a bowl of ice to place under the salad bowl to keep it chilled.

INGREDIENTS (serves 10)

FOR THE SALAD:

- ½ head green cabbage, shredded
- ½ head purple cabbage, shredded
- 2 large carrots, peeled and grated
- ½ red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced
- 3 scallions, chopped into 1" pieces
- ½ teaspoon sesame seeds

FOR THE DRESSING:

- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes

1 teaspoon garlic salt

Freshly cracked black pepper

PREPARATION:

In a large bowl, combine all the salad ingredients. Mix with your hands to distribute the different vegetables equally.

In medium sized bowl, whisk together all the dressing ingredients. Pour the dressing over the salad. Toss the salad well and cover with plastic wrap. Place in the refrigerator for at least two hours before serving to allow the cabbage to soften and the flavors to meld. You can even make it the night before.

Re-toss the coleslaw when ready to serve.

GRILLED STEELHEAD TROUT

As a nice alternative to salmon, try steelhead trout. The fillets are usually thinner than most salmon fillets, so I find they cook more evenly on the grill. Here's a simple recipe that comes together in no time. It's a great last-minute dish for those lazy summer days.

INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

1 lb steelhead fish, filleted

3 tablespoons soy sauce

3 tablespoons maple syrup

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 garlic clove, minced.

Salt and pepper

Olive oil

PREPARATION

Season the fish with salt and pepper. In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, maple syrup, mustard and garlic. Mix well.

Place fish in a large Ziploc bag. Pour in marinade and seal bag. Massage marinade around fish and place in refrigerator for 2-4 hours.

Oil grill racks. Preheat grill to 375 degrees. Place trout skin side down on grill, direct heat for 4 minutes. Keep an eye on it, because the skin may catch fire. If so, using a spatula, just move piece to indirect side. Flip, and cook on direct heat for an additional 4 minutes. (If you like your fish more well done, maybe add a minute on each side.)

Serve with coleslaw, rice or your favorite side dish.

ROASTED TOMATO SOUP

It's harvest time, so that means the neighbors have way too many tomatoes to know what to do with them. So, being the lucky recipient of their abundance, I'm putting this year's bounty to good use with this creamy roasted tomato soup. There's nothing better than making tomato soup from fresh garden ingredients. Wait, oh yes, there is one thing better—creamy homemade garden tomato soup with a grilled

cheese sandwich. Gotta go – I've got some sandwiches to make.

INGREDIENTS (serves 3-4)

2 pounds cherry tomatoes (or whatever tomatoes you have from the garden)

1 medium onion, thickly sliced

1 head of garlic

1 cayenne pepper

3 Tablespoons olive oil

2 cups of vegetable stock

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream (optional)

salt and pepper to taste

FOR GARNISH

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan

Fresh basil leaves

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place aluminum foil on the bottom of a baking sheet.

Place the tomatoes, onion slices and pepper on the baking sheet. Cut the garlic head in half, and wrap it in a small piece of aluminum foil. Drizzle all with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Using your hands, gently massage the oil and spices to cover all sides of the vegetables. Place in oven and roast for 30 minutes. Allow to cool.

Pressing the base of the garlic head, squeeze the roasted garlic out, discarding the skin. Only use half. (*Save the the other half for garlic bread or other dishes.*) Place the

tomatoes, onions, pepper and roasted garlic in a blender. Add the vegetable stock. Re-season with salt and pepper. Blend until smooth.

When ready to serve, reheat. Ladle out soup into bowls and drizzle a thin line of cream on top. Garnish with Parmesan cheese and basil leaves.