

Recipes by *Here & Now* Resident Chef Kathy Gunst

Mini Sweet Potato and Shallot Latkes with Toppings

Kathy's Note: Sweet potatoes make great potato pancakes. They have a gorgeous orange color and they don't brown or get starchy like white potatoes. I grate them with shallots and give them a subtle hint of freshly ground nutmeg. Normally I like to serve them on a platter with various toppings: a dollop of sour cream, horseradish, applesauce, mango chutney, and apple chutney. But this year I think I'll serve them with cranberry sauce to honor Thanksgiving.

Ingredients:

4 medium sweet potatoes, about 1 ½ pounds

2 medium shallots, peeled

2 eggs, whisked

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

¼ cup flour, plus 1 tablespoon

About 3 cups vegetable oil

Toppings: about 1 cup sour cream, applesauce, mango chutney, and apple chutney

Instructions:

Using the largest opening on a cheese grater, grate the potatoes into a large bowl. Grate the shallots on the same large opening and mix with the potatoes. Add the eggs, salt, pepper, nutmeg and flour and stir well to fully incorporate all the ingredients.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.

In a large, heavy skillet, heat the oil over high heat. The oil should be at least one inch thick. Let the oil get really hot. To test, add a small piece of grated potato, the oil should sizzle right up. Make a pancake from about 2 heaping tablespoons of batter, forming it into a pancake about 2 inches wide. Add the pancakes to the hot oil, being careful not to overcrowd the skillet. Cook 2 minutes. Reduce the heat slightly and, using a slotted spoon, gently flip the pancake over. Cook another 2 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining batter. You can keep the drained pancakes warm on a cookie sheet in the preheated oven for about 5 to 10 minutes.

Serve hot with any or all of the toppings. We like to add a dollop of sour cream to one, and then a dollop of applesauce to the next, and then the chutneys, so everyone gets a little taste of everything.

Makes 16 two-inch pancakes.

Variations:

- Use carrots instead of sweet potatoes and add a pinch of ground ginger instead of nutmeg. Serve with thick Greek-style yogurt.
 - Add ¼ cup minced chives to the pancake batter and add very thinly sliced scallions instead of shallots.
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Alabaster Mashed Potatoes and Turnips

Kathy's Note: Turnips have a distinctive, earthy flavor that can be overwhelming when eaten on their own. They are the perfect balance to creamy potatoes, adding a touch of mystery to one of the most common holiday foods around –mashed potatoes. You can prepare the mashed turnips and potatoes hours ahead of time and reheat in a pot set over low heat or in a gratin dish or ovenproof skillet at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes, or until bubbling hot. You can make this dish using all low-fat milk or a combination of milk and cream, depending on how rich you want the dish to be.

Ingredients:

One large turnip, about 2 pounds, peeled and chopped into small pieces
2 1/2 pounds potatoes, peeled and chopped into small pieces
2 to 3 tablespoons butter
About 1 1/2 cups milk, low-fat milk, or heavy cream, or a combination
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup minced chives or parsley, optional

Instructions:

Bring a large pot lightly salted water to boil over high heat. Add the turnips and potatoes and cook until tender when tested with a small sharp knife, about 20 minutes. Drain well. Place back in the pot and let dry out for a minute or two. Add the butter and about 1 cup of the milk and mash the vegetables using a hand held masher or an immersion blender. It's fine for the mixture to be slightly chunky. Season to taste. Add the additional 1/2 cup milk or cream to the desired consistency. Serve hot. See note above about reheating.

Serves 6 to 8.

Variations:

- Omit the turnip and add 2 pounds peeled, chopped parsnips for Mashed Potato-Parsnips.
- Omit the turnip and add 1 leek cut into 1-inch pieces and 2 onions, peeled and chopped.
- Omit the turnip and add one 2 pound winter squash, peeled and chopped instead.
- Omit the turnips and add 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped instead.

- Add 6 cloves peeled whole garlic to the pot with the potatoes and turnips for a garlic-flavored dish.
 - Place the mashed potatoes in a gratin dish and sprinkle on 1 cup grated hard cheese (Parmesan, cheddar, Gruyere...) or a soft goat cheese or blue cheese and bake for 30 minutes.
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Mashed Parsnips and Pears

Kathy's Note: Why is it we always serve plain old mashed potatoes or mashed sweet potatoes year after year? I decided to experiment with various vegetables and fruits that pair well together and would make delicious accompaniments to any holiday roast. Sweet parsnip and pears turns out to be an excellent, unexpected combination.

Ingredients:

2 pounds parsnips, smaller, thinner ones are best, peeled and cut into 1/2- inch size pieces

2 ripe pears, peeled, cored and chopped into 1/2-inch size pieces

2/3 cup heavy cream

3 tablespoons butter, cubed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions:

Bring a medium size pot of water to boil. Add the parsnips, cover, and cook about 10 to 12 minutes, or until tender when tested with a small, sharp knife. Drain thoroughly.

Place the cooked parsnips into the container of a food processor. Add the pear to the hot parsnips and whirl until chunky. Add the cream, butter, salt, and pepper and puree until almost smooth. The mixture can be slightly chunky or you may prefer it smoother. Taste for seasoning. Serve hot or make ahead of time and place in a small casserole or ovenproof skillet, cover and refrigerate until ready to cook. To reheat, place in a 350 degree oven for about 15 minutes, or until bubbling hot. Stir well before serving.

Serves 8.

Sweet Potato Galette with Mushrooms and Kale

Kathy's Note: This recipe from my friend Joe Yonan makes a delicious centerpiece for any holiday meal and will serve 2. But it can easily be doubled or tripled and made in a bigger skillet, or casserole dish. *If vegan, use a vegan-friendly cheese, like Daiya brand Swiss or Havarti, in place of the Gruyere cheese.*

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Joe's Note: When I want something a little fancier than a roasted sweet potato with toppings, I make this savory cake, built on the principles of the classic French potato galette (what Julia Child and company called galette de pommes de terre). Rather than make it a side dish, like the French, I stuff mine with hearty vegetables to make it a meal. This is a hearty portion, so if you're serving two, just add a crisp green salad topped with more vegetables, and split the galette. By the way, if the name threw you for a loop and you were expecting a rustic, free-form pastry, remember that galette is French for "cake," and the culinary term has been used for anything resembling one. If you have greens already cooked and on hand, you can use those instead of the raw kale; just combine about 1/3 cup of them with the mushrooms after cooking the latter.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup lightly packed kale leaves
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked Spanish paprika (pimentón), or 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (for more heat)
- 1 very small onion or large shallot lobe, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
- 4 ounces oyster or other variety meaty mushrooms, stemmed and chopped
- Kosher or sea salt
- 1 small (6- to 8-ounce) sweet potato, scrubbed but not peeled, cut in 1/8-inch slices
- 2 tablespoons grated Comté, Gruyère, or other nutty mountain cheese
- 2 tablespoons raw unsalted pecan or walnut halves
- 1 green onion, trimmed and thinly sliced

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Strip the kale leaves from the stems and coarsely chop the leaves. Thinly slice the stems and keep them separate from the leaves.

Pour 1 tablespoon of the oil into a medium skillet over medium heat. When it starts to shimmer, sprinkle in the pimenton and let it sizzle and bloom for a few seconds, then add the onion, garlic, and sliced kale stems and sauté until tender. Add the mushrooms and sauté until they collapse and release their liquid, then add the kale leaves and continue cooking until the liquid has evaporated. Season with salt to taste and remove from the heat.

Pour the remaining tablespoon of oil into a small, well-seasoned cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Carefully arrange half of the sweet potato slices in the skillet in concentric circles, overlapping to form a couple of layers; sprinkle each layer with a little salt as you go. Spoon on the mushroom-kale mixture, and top with the grated cheese.

Arrange the remaining sweet potato slices on top, sprinkling each layer lightly with salt as you go. Press the galette with a spatula, cover the skillet tightly with aluminum foil, and bake until the sweet potatoes are easily pierced with a fork, 20 to 25 minutes.

While the galette is baking, sprinkle the pecans into a small skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, shaking the pan frequently, until the nuts start to brown and become fragrant, a few minutes. Immediately transfer them to a plate to cool; if you leave them to cool in the pan, they can burn. Once they are cool, chop them.

Remove the galette from the oven and take off the foil. Turn the oven to broil and slide the skillet under the broiler element or flame until the sweet potatoes just brown on top.

Let the galette cool for a few minutes, then run a knife around the edges of the skillet to loosen it. Invert a plate over the skillet and, using oven mitts, hold the skillet and plate together and quickly flip the two so the plate is on the bottom and set it on the counter. Lift off the skillet. Some of the potato slices may stick to the pan; use a spatula to scrape them out and patch up the galette.

Sprinkle with the green onion slices and nuts and eat. (If you prefer, you can leave the galette in the pan and cut wedges out of it for eating.)

Roasted Maple-Glazed Carrots with Pomegranates, Char-Roasted Scallions, and Maple Glazed Walnuts

Kathy's Note: This is a gorgeous salad/side dish that can be made ahead of time and served at room temperature. It could also be a vegetarian or vegan or gluten free offering. Wow, everyone can eat it!

Ingredients:

8 carrots, from a farmers market if possible, washed and peeled with root still attached

8-10 scallions, ends trimmed and left whole

Salt and pepper

¼ cup olive oil, plus 2 to 3 tablespoons

½ fresh pomegranate
About 1/3 cup maple syrup

The Nuts:

1 teaspoon butter (or use 1 teaspoon olive oil if vegan)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup walnuts or pecans or a mixture
¼ cup maple syrup
Sea salt

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Cut carrots lengthwise through root and then cut in half again lengthwise so you have 4 pieces. Arrange in a roasting pan cut side up, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place the scallions in another roasting pan and drizzle with about 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast for 10 minutes. Pour the syrup over the carrots and roast another 10 minutes. The scallions should be quite browned—almost charred. Remove when they are just beginning to turn dark brown. The carrots are done when almost tender when tested with a small sharp knife and the syrup has thickened. Stir to coat the carrots thoroughly.

While the carrots and scallions are roasting make the nuts: melt the butter and oil (or heat the oil) in a medium skillet over moderate heat. Add the nuts and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the maple syrup and cook, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes, or until thoroughly glazed. Remove to a piece of aluminum foil or parchment paper, separating the nuts. Let cool. Sprinkle with sea salt.

Place the carrots in the center of a platter. Arrange the scallions along the outside of the platter.

Cut the pomegranate in half and, using a rolling pin, bang on the uncut skin side of the pomegranate to release the seeds. Sprinkle the seeds on top of the carrots and squeeze the juice on top. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature.

Serves 4 to 6.