

Sticky Fingers Cooking®

Rocco's Crispy Sweet Potatoes

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** 25 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

bake: to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

slice: to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

Equipment

- Oven
- Baking dish (9 x 13)
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Liquid measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Small bowl
- Wooden spoon
- Zester (or grater with small zesting plate/side)
- Citrus squeezer or juicer

Ingredients

Rocco's Crispy Sweet Potatoes

- 2 medium sweet potatoes

- 1/2 C unsalted butter **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 3 T nut-free vegetable oil)****
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried onion flakes or 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 C shelf-stable grated Parmesan cheese **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub nutritional yeast)****
- juice of 1 lemon

Food Allergen Substitutions

Rocco's Crispy Sweet Potatoes

Dairy: Substitute 3 T of a nut-free vegetable oil for 1/2 C unsalted butter. Substitute nutritional yeast for shelf-stable grated Parmesan cheese.

Instructions

Rocco's Crispy Sweet Potatoes

intro

This week's recipe is like an invitation to my childhood dinner table. My name is Dylan Sabuco, and I grew up in a proudly Italian household where dinner was one of the most important events of the day. It did not matter if you were happy, sad, mad, or anything in between; we all gathered around every night and had a comically oversized meal. Rocco chicken is a Sabuco family staple. My dad's nickname is Rocco, and this dish was his go-to dish for us growing up. Traditionally, Dad would pound chicken breasts ultra-thin, sauté them quickly, and then layer the chicken with butter, lemon, herbs, and grated Parmesan cheese. After the chicken would come out of the oven, the smells would make my siblings and I run to the table. The Sticky Fingers Cooking version will substitute sweet potatoes for chicken for an equally delectable experience.

preheat

Preheat your oven to 400 F.

slice + bake

Slice **2 medium sweet potatoes** into large rounds. Each potato should be about 1/2 inch thick and 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide. Place all the potatoes into a 9 x 13 baking dish in a single layer.

measure + zest + juice

Meanwhile, measure **1/2 cup unsalted butter, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, 1 teaspoon dried onion flakes,** and **1 teaspoon salt** and combine them in a bowl with a wooden spoon. Then, zest and juice **1 lemon**, separating the zest and juice into 2 small bowls or measuring cups. (Set aside the zest for the Fragrant Rice Pilaf, if making, or another recipe.)

spoon + sprinkle + pour

Spoon the seasoned butter over the top of the sweet potatoes, then sprinkle **1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese** over the top of that. (The butter will melt its way down to the bottom of the dish as the sweet potatoes cook.) Next, pour the lemon juice into the baking dish.

bake + serve

Bake the sweet potatoes for 25 minutes or until the sweet potatoes are fork tender. Serve atop Fragrant Rice Pilaf (see recipe) and wash it down with Lemon-Berry Soda (see recipe).

Featured Ingredient: Sweet Potato!

Hi! I'm Sweet Potato!

"Sweet potatoes are root vegetables, like beets and carrots! We're very popular in the Fall, especially for holiday dinners, where you might find us baked whole or sliced and diced as part of a side dish. We also pair well with fruit and other vegetables in salads and casseroles."

History

The sweet potato originated in Central or South America, and people began cultivating them in Central America at least 5,000 years ago.

Sweet potatoes have been grown in Peru for almost 3,000 years and remain one of the major crops for people in Peru.

When Columbus arrived in the New World, Native Americans were already growing and utilizing sweet potatoes. Columbus brought sweet potatoes back to Europe, and other explorers brought them from the New World to Asia.

Sweet potatoes were cultivated widely in Colonial America and were a significant form of sustenance for farmers and soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

As far as records show, orange sweet potatoes originally came from Puerto Rico and were named "yams" by Louisiana farmers to differentiate them from the white-fleshed variety grown in other parts of the country. Indeed, the sweet potato is officially the state vegetable of Louisiana! It's also North Carolina's official state vegetable.

George Washington grew sweet potatoes on his estate at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

North American supermarkets import much of their sweet potatoes from the Caribbean.

February is National Sweet Potato month!

Anatomy & Etymology

Sweet potatoes are edible roots, not tubers like potatoes. Actually, sweet potatoes aren't related to potatoes but are part of the Morning Glory family. Plants from this family produce beautiful flowers whose seeds were revered for their laxative properties by the Chinese.

The flesh of sweet potatoes can be white, yellow, orange, or even purple!

Enslaved African-Americans called the sweet potato "nyami" because it reminded them of the starchy, edible tuber from their homeland. "Nyami" is a Senegalese word that was eventually shortened to "yam." Sweet potatoes are often confused with yams, and this is why!

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Sweet potatoes are eaten by people worldwide as they are a hearty crop that packs a lot of nutrition. It's best to store sweet potatoes in cool, dark, and dry places. They won't last as long in the fridge. Small, firm sweet potatoes tend to be sweeter and creamier. Large sweet potatoes contain more starch, as they've had more time to grow and develop the starches. Look for smooth, firm, even skin. Sweet potatoes should be cooked, not eaten raw. You can use them in many savory and sweet recipes. Sweet potatoes make an excellent side dish—you can bake, mash, or boil them—and their nutritional benefits are increased when combined with healthy fats, like avocado, butter, or olive oil! If they had their say, sweet potatoes might like to be known as everyday veggies rather than just for special occasions. For example, we in the United States eat more sweet potatoes around Thanksgiving than at any other time. But sweet potatoes are available year-round and should be enjoyed more often because of their benefits!

Nutrition

Sweet potatoes are very nutritious! Their color can tell us which nutrients they contain (like many vegetables and fruits!).

If a sweet potato is orange, it contains beta-carotene (other orange foods that contain this nutrient include carrots, shrimp, and oranges). Can you hear the name of a familiar vegetable in the word "beta-carotene?" Carrot! We know that beta-carotene is good for our eyes and skin. Have you ever been asked to eat your carrots because they are good for your eyes? Beta-carotene is why!

Sweet potatoes also have vitamin K, which helps our blood clot. When we get a cut, our blood clots to stop the bleeding, and vitamin K helps with this!

We often talk about fiber when we reveal our Surprise Ingredients because vegetables and fruits contain a lot of fiber. Sweet potatoes are no exception. So what does fiber help with? Digestion! And which body parts are responsible for digestion? Many, but namely our stomach and intestines.