

February is Sweet Potato Month on Local Dish

Sweet Potatoes are delicious any time of the year and lucky for us here in North Carolina we have them available all year long. Did you know North Carolina grows more sweet potatoes than any other state? We supply the US with 40% of the sweet potato crop each year. Now that's something to brag about! This segment has some delicious and wonderful recipes using fresh NC sweet potatoes that I hope will inspire you. Remember, for the freshest ingredients when you're cooking, It's Got to Be NC.

Sweet Potato Turnovers

1 can of Grands flaky canned biscuits (8 count)
2 1/2 cups water
2 cups sugar
2 tablespoons white Karo syrup
1 stick butter or margarine
1 package of 8 sweet potato patties (usually found in or near the meat dept. of grocery store. I found them at Food Lion) **
Cinnamon to taste

Melt butter in 9x13 baking dish. In a separate pan, boil water, sugar and syrup for 10 minutes. Divide the canned biscuits in half so that you have two round biscuits (will have 16 halves). Pat each biscuit out to a little larger size. Cut potato patties in half and place 1/2 on each biscuit. Fold biscuit half over to form a turnover and crimp the edges to seal. Place the turnovers close together in the dish of melted butter. Pour the sugar water mixture over the turnovers. It will look like a lot of liquid, but don't worry. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Place in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. After removing from the oven, spoon some of the liquid over each turnover to keep from getting too dry. This treat tastes best when served warm. The liquid will thicken as dish cools.

** Note: If you can't find the sweet potato patties in the grocery store, you can make your own. Cut thick slices of sweet potato rounds and boil until a little tender.

Lisa's Notes: This recipe was shared with me after a Bible Study luncheon. Thank you Mrs. Christine Adams or "Ma" as you are known to your loving family. The recipes that are passed down through the generations are some of the best and this is one of them.

Sweet Potato Biscuits

2 cups self-rising flour
1/4 cup sugar
3 TBS shortening
2 TBS butter
1 cup cooked, mashed sweet potatoes
1/2 cup half and half (can use plain milk)

Combine flour and sugar in a medium bowl, cut in shortening and butter with a pastry blender until mixture is crumbly. Add mashed sweet potato and milk, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead 4 or 5 times.

Roll dough to 1/2 inch thickness, cut with biscuit cutter. Place on lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 400 degrees for 14-15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Yields about 1 1/2 dozen.

Lisa's Notes: Add a piece of country ham or a little butter and you have a real treat. You can also make a smaller size biscuit which is perfect for a party.

Sweet Potatoes on the Half Shell (makes 14 individual servings)

What you can prepare a day ahead

7 medium sized baked sweet potatoes made the day before you prepare your dessert, sliced in half and chilled overnight.

The Crust

7 medium sized sweet potatoes sliced in half and scooped clean to the skins (reserve 1 and 1/2 cups for the filling; use the rest in meals later in the week)

9 oz. ginger snap cookies

1/2 cup pecan halves

1 tablespoon turbinado sugar

1-2 pinches salt

4 tablespoon unsalted melted butter

1 oz. bourbon (used in winning recipe – add more butter if you do not use the bourbon)

Place the gingersnaps, pecan halves, sugar and salt in a food processor and pulse until a nice even medium crumb has formed. Add in melted butter and bourbon and process until the crust starts to pull together. Place a scoop of crust mix into each sweet potato half and press along the inside of the skins until a nice even uniform crust is present all along the inside up to the rim, should be about 1/4 inch thick. Arrange the sweet potato halves in a large round cake pan or a 9 x 13 cake pan, pressing them as close together as possible.

The Filling

1 1/2 cup baked sweet potato

1 1/4 cup turbinado sugar

2 cups heavy cold cream

16 oz. cream cheese (cut into several large pieces)

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ginger

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

2 large eggs room temperature

3 large egg yolks room temperature

Puree the sweet potato in the food processor until the consistency is that of canned pumpkin. Combine the sweet potato puree in a saucepan with the turbinado sugar and heat on medium heat until the mixture starts to bubble, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat to low and cook 3-5

minutes until the mixture is thick and glossy. Place the mixture back into the food processor and process for about a minute with the feed tube open to vent steam.

While the processor is running add the cold cream and the cream cheese that has been cut into several large pieces. Process 30 seconds or until well incorporated and smooth. Scrape down the side of the food processor. Pulse in your spices. Add the eggs and yolks and process for 5 seconds. Pour the mixture into the potato shells, place cake pan in a larger pan filled ½ full with water and bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes, then turn off the oven and let the cheesecakes cool for 1 hour in the oven. Drizzle with your favorite caramel filling and garnish with pecan halves.

Lisa's Notes: Use medium to large sweet potatoes or you may have some filling leftover. I would also recommend making a recipe and a half of the crust. Michael Hodge of Raleigh took first place at the 2011 NC State Fair with this recipe in the Anything But Ordinary! Sweet Potato Recipe Contest.

Curried Sweet Potato Salad

2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into rough ¾" chunks
3 tablespoons pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
½ cup fat-free plain yogurt
2 tablespoons light mayonnaise
2 tablespoons brown sugar
½ teaspoon curry powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup juice-packed canned pineapple tidbits, drained
3 scallions, sliced

Place the sweet potatoes in a large saucepan and barely cover with cold water. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer, covered for 10-12 minutes, or until tender. Drain and let cool.

In a salad bowl, whisk together the yogurt, mayonnaise, sugar, curry powder, and salt until well blended. Add the pineapple, scallions, and sweet potatoes. Mix together gently. Sprinkle with pecans and serve, or cover and chill until ready to serve.

Makes 6 side-dish servings

Servings: 241 calories, 4 g protein, 49 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 125 mg sodium, 6 g dietary fiber
Diet Exchanges: ½ fruit, 2 ½ bread, ½ fat
Carb Choices: 3

Lisa's Notes: I found this recipe in The Sugar Solution Cookbook (2006) and wanted to share it because it is a fresh and delicious way to enjoy NC sweet potatoes and it is low in sugar. The dressing has such a unique flavor; I plan to try it in chicken salad 😊