



November 16, 2016

Easy Sides

Traditionally, proteins are the centrepiece in a meal, but that doesn't mean your sides should struggle for attention. With creative seasonings and new twists to classics, these three easy sides will complement the star of the show, and maybe steal a few scenes themselves.

Asian Vegetables combines four favourite veggies -- zucchini, red bell pepper, mushrooms and onion -- marinated in a soy-vinegar base with honey and red pepper flakes for a spicy-sweet sauce. This deceptively simple combination packs a lot of flavour, whether grilled on the stove or on the barbecue.

Mashed potatoes are a great way to provide some comforting carbs to cold-weather dinners. Basil Mashed Potatoes is a herbal twist on traditional mashed potatoes, using basil and adding yogurt for a bit of culture. Cooking cubed pieces with the help of a mixer means they'll be ready in a flash.

If you're looking for an alternative to potatoes, try yams. Braising is a great way to infuse flavour as well as moisture, so you can imagine how rich and savoury our Braised Yams simmered in chicken broth and herbs will be.

ASIAN VEGETABLES

Ingredients:

- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp (5 mL) grated fresh ginger
- 3 tbsp (40 mL) red wine vinegar
- 3 tbsp (40 mL) soy sauce
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) honey
- 3 tbsp (40 mL) sesame oil
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into chunks
- 1 medium onion, cut into wedges



2 cups (500 mL) whole medium mushrooms

Method:

To prepare marinade, whisk together first 7 ingredients (garlic through red pepper flakes). Toss vegetables with marinade to coat. Let vegetables stand for 15 minutes. Remove vegetables from marinade; discard marinade. Place vegetables in a grill wok or on a grill topper and grill over medium heat on natural gas barbecue, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are browned and tender, about 10 - 15 minutes. *Serves 4 - 6.*

BASIL MASHED POTATOES

Ingredients:

6 cups (1.5 L) cubed peeled baking potatoes
1/4 cup (50 mL) milk
1/4 cup (50 mL) yogurt
1 tbsp (15 mL) butter
1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) basil, crumbled
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) white pepper

Method:

Cook potatoes in boiling salted water until tender; drain. Add remaining ingredients (milk through pepper). Using medium speed of an electric mixer, beat mixture for 1 minute or until smooth. Do not overbeat. *Serves 6 - 8.*



BRAISED YAMS

Ingredients:

2 lb yams, peeled and cut into 1 1/2 inch rounds
2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper
3 tbsp salted butter
1 tbsp canola oil
3 cloves garlic, bruised
2 bay leaves
2 cups no-salt-added chicken broth
2 sprigs fresh thyme

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Sprinkle yams with salt and pepper; set aside.
3. Melt butter with oil in a large deep ovenproof frypan over medium heat. Add yams and brown on both sides, about 2 - 3 minutes per side.
4. Add garlic and bay leaves; sauté for 2 minutes.
5. Add broth and thyme. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat.
6. Bake, covered, until yams are tender, about 20 - 25 minutes. Remove frypan from oven.
7. Using a slotted spoon, transfer yams to a serving dish; reserve broth mixture. Cover yams with foil; keep warm.
8. Return frypan to medium heat. Bring broth mixture to a boil.
9. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until broth mixture is reduced by half, about 13 minutes. Remove and discard garlic, bay leaves and thyme.
10. Pour reduced broth mixture over yams. *Serves 6.*