

# FOOD & DINING

## Impress holiday guests with a unique take on cookies

Hosting friends and family during the holiday season is no small task, and hosts often place a great emphasis on what to feed their guests. Guests might expect traditional holiday fare like turkey, the go-to entrée when sitting down for family meals. But before the big dinner, hosts can take steps to surprise their guests with something unique, such as the following recipe for “Cowboy Cookies” from Bob Blumer’s “Surreal Gourmet Bites” (Chronicle Books). A slice of tenderloin sandwiched between caramelized yams, this delicious concoction is sure to stir up some conversation among your guests this holiday season.

**Cowboy Cookies**  
Yields 12 bites

**Chipotle Aioli**  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 egg yolk, room temperature

1/2 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1 teaspoon chipotle chili powder or 1 tablespoon puréed canned chipotle in adobo sauce

**Cookies**  
6 skinny yams or sweet potatoes, about 2 inches in diameter, or fatter ones if available  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
4 teaspoons salt  
3 tablespoons New Mexican or any other pure chili powder  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper  
3 6-ounce filet mignons, 2 inches thick, or 1 whole 1-pound pork tenderloin  
1/4 to 1/2 cup of your favorite barbecue sauce  
1/4 cup Chipotle Aioli (optional)

Preheat oven to 325 F.  
Add the garlic, egg yolk, lemon juice, salt, and pepper to a blender or mini food processor and purée until smooth. Alternatively, whisk the ingredients together in a medium bowl.  
Very slowly drizzle in the oil with the motor running and purée until aioli thickens (should take between 2 and 3 minutes). If you are using a whisk, keep whisking while slowly drizzling in the oil until the aioli is thick. Stir in chipotle. Reserve.



diameter, use a 2-inch round cookie cutter or a paring knife to trim to desired size.

In a medium bowl, add olive oil. Toss yam slices until they are lightly coated with oil. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt. Spread on a nonstick baking sheet or on any parchment paper-lined sheet pan and bake for 30 minutes. Turn yams over and bake for 30 more minutes, or until yams are browned, slightly condensed, and begging to be eaten. Reserve in aluminum foil to keep warm.

Preheat grill to high heat.  
While yams are baking, in a medium bowl, combine chili powder, sugar and pepper. Generously rub down the filets with this dry rub. Wrap filets in wax paper or plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Just before grilling, pat down filets with remaining 3 teaspoons salt. Over direct heat, sear meat for 2 minutes a side on all 6 sides. Transfer to indirect heat, cover grill, and cook for approximately 6 more minutes for medium-rare, or until filets have reached your desired degree of doneness. Alternatively, filets can be broiled for approximately 10 minutes per side.

Place meat on a plate and cover with aluminum foil. Let rest for 5 minutes before slicing. Set each filet on its side and cut into 1/4-inch thick round slices.

To assemble, set out 2 rows of 12 yam slices each. Spoon 1/2 teaspoon barbecue sauce over each slice in the front row and 1/2 teaspoon chipotle aioli over each in the back row (if you don't make the aioli, replace with barbecue sauce). Top each yam in the first row with a slice of steak and cover with an aioli-slathered yam slice.

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