



TIMESAIVING & TASTY TATERS. Glazed spicy sweet potatoes are prepared in a skillet in Concord, New Hampshire. No room in the oven? You can cook these delicious sweet potatoes on top of the stove in about 10 minutes flat. (AP Photo/Matthew Mead)

No room in the oven for sweet potatoes? Take them topside!

By Sara Moulton
The Associated Press

One of the biggest challenges of producing a holiday meal is figuring out how to cook all the various dishes and land them all on the table at the same thrilling moment.

It's not easy, especially when there's a big roast of some kind hogging the oven for hours. The part that annoys me most? It forces my glazed sweet potatoes, which require 45 minutes in the oven, to sit on the sidelines. Well, not anymore. You can cook these delicious glazed sweet potatoes on top of the stove in about 10 minutes flat.

But let's talk about the sweet potato before tackling the method.

These days, there's usually quite a selection of sweet potatoes at the supermarket, many of which are mistakenly called yams. True yams are indigenous to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. They are mild in flavor and starchy. How they became confused with sweet potatoes is a long story, but suffice it to say that if you're at the supermarket in search of a sweet potato that is indeed sweet, you'll probably be all right

whether it's labelled sweet potato or yam.

As noted, one of the great things about this recipe is that the potatoes don't need to spend 45 minutes in an oven. Instead, they're cooked in water in a large skillet. The recipe's most time-consuming step is peeling and slicing the potatoes, though you certainly can do that ahead of time, then park them on the counter until you're 10 minutes from dinnertime.

Cooking the potatoes takes so little time because they've been sliced fairly thin. Another perk of this recipe: Adding the spices to the water in which the spuds are boiled ensures deep flavor. And the glaze? All you have to do is boil down the cooking liquid and add some butter and brown sugar. Simple!

Happily, this method works equally well with carrots and butternut squash. It's a sure-fire way to conjure up a stress-free — and mouth-watering — side dish for your roast turkey or ham.

Editor's note: Sara Moulton was executive chef at Gourmet magazine for nearly 25 years, and spent a decade hosting several Food Network shows. She currently stars in public television's "Sara's Weeknight Meals" and has written three cookbooks, including Sara Moulton's Everyday Family Dinners.

Skillet-Glazed Spicy Sweet Potatoes

Start to finish: 35 minutes

Servings: 4

- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne
- Kosher salt
- 1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled, halved, or quartered lengthwise, and sliced crosswise 1/3-inch thick
- 2 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

In a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat, whisk together 1 1/2 cups water, the cumin, paprika, cayenne, and about 1 teaspoon of salt. Add the potatoes, then cover the skillet and bring the liquid to a boil. When it boils, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the potatoes, covered, for three to five minutes. Remove the lid and prick the potatoes with a paring knife. If they are almost tender, remove the lid and increase the temperature so the liquid boils. If they are not almost tender, cover the potatoes and cook, covered, for another minute or so, then remove the lid.

Boil the liquid until it only comes up the side of the skillet about 1/4 inch. Add the butter, brown sugar, and lemon juice, then simmer, stirring gently, until the liquid is reduced to a glaze. Season with salt and serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: 210 calories (50 calories from fat, 24 percent of total calories); 6 g fat (3.5 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 15 mg cholesterol; 580 mg sodium; 38 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 3 g protein.

Roasted duck is easier — and more delicious — than you think

By Sara Moulton
The Associated Press

The prospect of roasting a duck strikes many a home cook as a mountain too high, but I'm not sure why.

It's definitely no more complicated than cooking a whole turkey, and I think it tastes far better. Some folks surely suspect that duck is gamey, but that's only true of some wild ducks. It's not true of the kind known as Pekin (or Long Island) duck, the domesticated product most widely available at supermarkets.

Other folks shy away because they've heard that duck is too fatty and rich. Sure enough, there is a fair amount of fat in duck, but most of it is in and under the skin. The meat itself actually is quite lean. And — surprise! — duck fat, unlike beef fat and most kinds of poultry fat, boasts some of the same healthy attributes as olive oil.

So this holiday season why not roast a duck? As noted, it's pretty simple. However, you do need to set aside enough time to let the bird cook properly in the oven, just as you would when roasting a



DECADENT DUCK. Roasting a duck is no more complicated than roasting a turkey, and this recipe has a French-style sauce. Pictured is Bistro-Style Slow-Roasted Duck. (AP Photo/Matthew Mead)

turkey. The goal is a bird with crispy skin and moist meat. The easiest way to make it happen? Roast the duck low and slow, pricking the skin every so often to drain out the fat. (Do be careful, however, not to prick the meat; you don't want to lose any juices from the meat.)

At the end of the process, the duck is treated to a final crisping in a high-heat oven, then retired for a nice long rest to let the juices redistribute before the bird is carved.

The slow-roasting process provides you with ample time to

make a succulent sauce from the bird's giblets, neck, and wings. Those parts are browned in a saucepan along with onions, carrots, and garlic, then simmered in red wine and chicken broth, and finally finished with green peppercorns and Dijon mustard. (You're welcome to lose the peppercorns if they're too hot for you.)

The end result is a wonderfully tasty duck swimming in a French-style sauce. Fancy! And much more interesting than turkey. Your guests will think you are a culinary genius.

Bistro-Style Slow-Roasted Duck

For a video demonstrating how to prepare a duck for roasting, visit <<https://youtu.be/K7w0sDBT-0Y>>.

Start to finish: 4 hours, 50 minutes (50 minutes active)

Servings: 4

- 5 1/2- to 6-pound Pekin (Long Island) duck
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 small carrot, coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed with the side of a knife
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 stalk celery, coarsely chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons drained bottled green peppercorns, packed in brine
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Heat the oven to 250° Fahrenheit. Remove the neck and giblets from the cavity of the duck, pat dry, and reserve. (Save the liver for another use, such as sautéing and serving on toast.)

Cut the last two joints of the wings off and reserve. Remove the excess fat from the cavity of the duck and cut off the flap of skin at the back end of the duck. (You can save the skin and fat to render into duck fat for future use.) Rinse the duck under cold water and pat dry with paper towels.

Using the tip of a paring knife, prick the duck all over, in 1/2-inch intervals, inserting the knife at an angle to pierce just the skin, not the flesh. Make sure to prick the skin around the leg thigh joint thoroughly, as there is a lot of fat stored there. Season the duck well with salt and pepper. Place on a rack in a roasting pan and roast on the oven's middle shelf for 3 1/2 hours, removing the roasting pan after the first and second hour of roasting to re-prick the duck skin.

After the duck has roasted for 3 1/2 hours, carefully pour off all the fat at the bottom of the roasting pan (reserving it for other uses, such as sautéing potatoes), and increase the oven temperature to 450° F. Return the duck to the oven and roast it for 10 minutes. Transfer the duck to a platter, cover with foil, then let it rest for 30 minutes before carving.

While the duck is roasting, cut the neck and wings into 1 1/2-inch pieces. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, warm the vegetable oil. Add the neck, giblets, and wings. Cook, stirring often, until golden brown, eight to 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and add the onion, carrot, and garlic. Cook until the vegetables are lightly browned, five to eight minutes.

Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring, for one minute. Add the wine and bring to a boil, stirring to pick up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Boil until most of the wine has evaporated. Add the celery, thyme, bay leaf, broth, and one cup water. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook, skimming off any scum that rises to the surface and adding water to the saucepan if the liquid dips below the bones, until the duck is ready to come out of the oven.

While the duck is resting, strain the stock and discard the solids. Measure the liquid. You should have about 1 1/2 cups. If you have more, boil the liquid down. If you have less, add water. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and 1/4 cup water. In the saucepan, bring the duck stock to a boil, add the flour mixture in a stream, whisking. Bring the mixture back to a boil and simmer four minutes. Stir in the green peppercorns and mustard, then season the sauce with salt and pepper.

Carve the duck and serve each portion with some of the sauce.

Nutrition information per serving: 980 calories (670 calories from fat, 68 percent of total calories); 75 g fat (25 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 210 mg cholesterol; 850 mg sodium; 10 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 2 g sugar; 50 g protein.