

CHILE-GLAZED SWEET POTATOES WITH CINNAMON AND ORANGE

Source: Rick Bayless's Mexican Kitchen

Prepared by: Matthew Nelson , May, 2016

Serves: 6-8 as an accompaniment

CHILE PASTE:

5 garlic cloves, unpeeled
6 medium to small (a scant 3 ounces total) dried ancho chiles, stemmed and seeded
1 teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Mexican
½ teaspoon cinnamon, preferred freshly ground Mexican canela
A generous ¼ teaspoon black pepper, preferably freshly ground
A generous 1/8 teaspoon cloves, preferably freshly ground
½ cup chicken broth or water

3 pounds (about 5 medium) sweet potatoes, unpeeled
1 tablespoon finely chopped orange zest, plus some thinly slivered zest for garnish
½ cup fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons honey
salt, a generous teaspoon
2 tablespoons melted butter or olive oil (optional) plus a little extra for the pan
a few tablespoons chopped cilantro for garnish
1 or 2 tablespoons Thick Cream, crème fraiche or sour cream thinned with a little milk for garnish

For paste:

Roast the unpeeled garlic on an ungreased griddle or heavy skillet over medium heat, turning occasionally until soft (they will blacken in spots), about 15 minutes; cool and peel. While the garlic is roasting, toast the chiles on another side of the griddle or skillet; 1 or 2 at a time, open them flat and press down firmly on the hot surface with a spatula; in a few seconds, when they crackle, even send up a wisp of smoke, flip them and press down to toast the other side. In a small bowl, cover the chiles with hot water and let rehydrate for 30 minutes, stirring regularly to ensure even soaking. Drain and discard the water.

Combine the oregano, cinnamon, black pepper and cloves in a food processor or blender, along with the chiles, garlic and broth or water. Process to a smooth puree, scraping and stirring every few seconds. Press through a medium mesh strainer into a small bowl

For the Dish:

Slice each of the sweet potatoes into 4 lengthwise wedges. Lightly butter or oil and 9 x 13 baking dish, and lay in the sweet potatoes in a single layer. Combine the chile seasoning paste with the orange zest, orange juice and honey. Taste and season with salt (it should taste salty as this is the seasoning for the potatoes). Spoon evenly over the sweet potatoes.

Turn on the oven to 350 degrees. Drizzle the sweet potatoes with the (optional) butter or oil, cover with aluminum foil and bake for 45 minutes or until the potatoes are almost fork tender. Raise the oven temperature to 425 degrees, uncover the potatoes, baste with the juices and bake until the potatoes are nicely glazed and the sauce reduced to a medium thickness, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle with slivers of orange zest, chopped cilantro and a drizzle of cream if you wish.

Advanced prep: The seasoning paste can be made a week or so in advance. The potatoes can be assembled a few hours in advance, or the whole dish can be baked and reheated.

Cook's Notes:



