
The Dish

November 2009

Level: Master's

RECIPE 2

Sweet Potato-Cheddar Gratin

Although sweet potatoes are a New World food, they originated in the Caribbean and would have been unfamiliar to the Pilgrims. Sweet potatoes started showing up on Thanksgiving menus in the 1870s and have been a holiday standby ever since. But many people find the traditional marshmallow-topped candied sweet potato casserole too much like dessert. This casserole combines sliced fresh sweet potatoes with sharp cheddar cheese for a savory side that's a bit more grown-up but will still appeal to kids. Any 2-quart baking dish—a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate, for example, or 11 x 7-inch dish—will do the job.

Do-ahead tip: Prepare the cheese sauce (step 2) and slice the potatoes a day in advance; refrigerate separately. Gently reheat the sauce before assembling and baking the casserole.

- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded sharp white cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/8-inch slices
- Nonstick cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Combine first 3 ingredients in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring with a whisk; bring to a simmer. Cook 2 minutes or until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, whisking frequently. Whisk in 1/2 cup cheese, salt and cayenne.
3. Arrange one-third of potatoes in the bottom of a 2-quart baking dish coated with cooking spray, overlapping slightly. Top with one-third of sauce and 2 tablespoons cheese. Repeat layer. Top with remaining potatoes

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and sauce. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup cheese. Bake for 40 minutes or until potatoes are tender and top is lightly browned and bubbly. Let stand 5 minutes. Yield: 8 to 10 servings.