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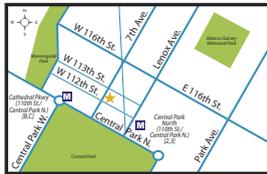
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CHOOSE

For light, flavorful Thanksgiving dishes, here are four recipes from NYC chefs

BY MEREDITH DELISO
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Vegetable side dishes quickly cross over into indulgent territory when soaked in heavy cream, coated with fried onions or baked under mounds of marshmallows.

But if you're looking for some sides this Thanksgiving that pack flavor — without the added calories — here are four recipes from NYC-based chefs and health coaches. They might become part of your own Thanksgiving tradition.



HEALTHY WITH NEDI

OVEN-ROASTED SWEET POTATO FRIES

By Neda Varbanova

Sweet potatoes are a Thanksgiving side staple. For a fun take, try these sweet potato fries. They make a yearly appearance at health coach Neda Varbanova's Thanksgiving. "Sweet potatoes are a rich source of fiber, beta-carotene, potassium and vitamin C," she notes in her new e-book, "Thanksgiving Recipes," which is available at healthywithnedi.com. "These 'fries' make delicious additions to entrees, side dishes and even just to snack on."

SERVES 4

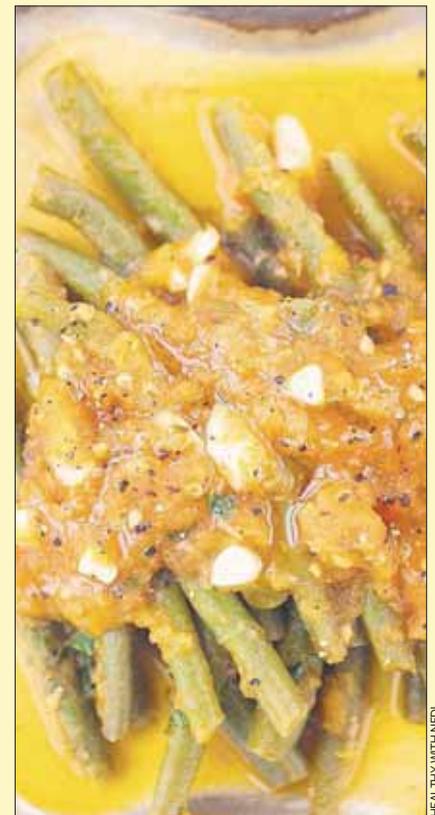
- 2 large sweet potatoes
- 1/2 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
Peel the sweet potatoes and cut them into long strands, French fries-style.

Place the potatoes in a large bowl, add olive oil and spices. Use your hands to mix well so all the fries are coated with oil and spice mix.

Line a baking sheet with foil and spread the fries in a single layer.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until golden brown. After the first 15 minutes, flip the sweet potatoes on other side.



HEALTHY WITH NEDI

GREEN BEANS WITH GARLIC TOMATO SAUCE

By Neda Varbanova

"These beans are steamed and covered with a tomato-garlicky sauce to make the perfect side dish for the holidays," Varbanova writes in "Thanksgiving Recipes," noting that green beans are a great source of vitamins A, E and B6, as well as rich in copper, iron and protein.

SERVES 4

- 1 lb. green beans, cleaned
- 3 medium tomatoes, grated
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp. parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Steam the green beans for 15 minutes, until tender.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a sauce pan and add minced garlic and tomatoes. Stir well and cook covered on low to medium heat for 10 minutes.

Add cooked beans, parsley, salt and pepper and cook for another 5 minutes. Transfer to a serving plate.

these sides



JOSHUA FOO

WINTER SQUASH CUPS WITH WILD RICE, HAZELNUTS AND CHERRIES

By Isa Chandra Moskowitz

This recipe is one of more than 200 vegan dishes in Isa Chandra Moskowitz's new cookbook, "The Superfun Times Vegan Holiday Cookbook." "Winter squash are nature's pottery!" writes the chef, who also just opened a new vegan restaurant in Williamsburg — Modern Love Brooklyn. "A stunning mix of wild rice, hazelnuts and cherries stuffed inside adds to the beauty and the yummy." Moskowitz recommends looking for squash that are a little bigger than a softball for these "cups," and to cut on a diagonal from the right of the stem to the left of the bottom nub.

SERVES 6

FOR THE SQUASH:

3 round winter squash, halved and seeded
Olive oil, for brushing
Salt

FOR THE WILD RICE:

1 cup wild rice, rinsed
3 cups vegetable broth
½ tsp. salt

FOR THE FILLING:

2 tbsp. refined coconut oil
1 large yellow onion, diced medium
3 celery ribs, sliced

½ tsp. dried thyme
¼ tsp. dried sage
1 cup shelled hazelnuts, toasted and roughly chopped
¾ cup dried cherries
2 tbsp. brown sugar
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
½ tsp. salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Squash and rice directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Lightly coat the squash with olive oil inside and out and sprinkle lightly with salt. Place the squash, cut-side down, on the lined baking sheet. Bake until the flesh is soft and can easily be pierced by a fork, about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and let it hang out until the filling is ready.

At the same time, cook the wild rice according to the package directions, using the vegetable broth and salt.

Filling directions

When the squash and rice are done, preheat a large saute pan over medium heat. Heat the coconut oil, then saute the onion and celery until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the thyme and sage. Cook for 1 more minute. Remove from the heat and toss in the cooked wild rice, hazelnuts and dried cherries. Add the brown sugar and chopped parsley and stir to combine. Add the salt and a few grinds of black pepper and adjust to taste.

Assembly

Fill each squash half with ½ to ¾ cup of the rice mixture and serve.



FOOD FOR FRIENDS/ADRIEN MUELLER

OVEN-ROASTED CARROTS WITH CURRY OIL AND FENNEL SEEDS

By Linnea Johansson

Keep it simple. That's chef and party planner Linnea Johansson's advice when throwing a dinner party. "Choose something easy to cook and prep as much of the dinner as possible before your guests come over," she writes in her latest cookbook, "Food For Friends." These carrots definitely fit the bill.

SERVES 2-4

2 bunches fresh carrots
3 tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. curry powder
1 tbsp. fennel seeds
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Mix oil, curry powder and fennel seeds in a small bowl.

Wash and scrub the carrots and place on a sheet pan. Brush them with the oil mixture and season with salt and pepper.

Bake the carrots in the oven for about 20-25 minutes, or until the carrots have softened.

And for dessert...

Avocados are the ideal dessert ingredient — they're creamy, mix well and are a healthy fat.

This holiday, try these chocolate and avocado truffles by Linnea Johansson, from her cookbook, "Perfect Parties." (MEREDITH DELISO)

CHOCOLATE AND AVOCADO TRUFFLES

MAKES 6-8 TRUFFLES

1 large ripe avocado
½ cup of chopped dark chocolate (65% cacao)
1-3 tsp. agave syrup
¼ cup of coconut flakes

Peel the avocado and remove the pit. Place in a mixer and mix until it is a smooth, mousse-like consistency.

Melt the chopped chocolate in the microwave on medium heat and stir every 30 seconds, making sure it does not burn.

Once melted, you should have equal parts avocado



LINNEA JOHANSSON

mousse and melted chocolate.

Slowly pour the melted chocolate into the avocado mousse, adding a little at a time and mixing it well.

Flavor to taste. If you like a sweeter truffle you can add more chocolate and a few

teaspoons of agave syrup.

Put the truffle batter in the fridge and let it harden for about 1 hour. Once hardened, roll into truffle balls.

Finish the truffles by rolling them in the coconut flakes. Will keep in the fridge for two to three days.