

## Yams ... Getting Out of the Candied Rut

As a child I loathed holiday meals. The turkey was always dry, I hated the consistency of mashed potatoes, and that awful orange-colored dish was always sickeningly sweet. As I grew older I learned that this strange orange-colored dish was actually an American tradition. Yams as they were called (though they were in reality sweet potatoes like the one pictured) doused in a sugary glaze and sometimes even topped with (heaven forbid), marshmallows! ...

I avoided those horrible tubers for years. That is until one wonderful restaurant introduced me to the savory side of sweet potatoes. Now, I must admit (I am sure the pro-candied yam emails will come a pouring) I don't quite get why a sweet potato or a yam needs added sugar. I can respect a sweet potato pie, but as part of the main meal, the naturally sweet orange flesh contrasts beautifully with savory spices.

These days I have an entire arsenal of roasted sweet potato recipes to feast upon during the fall and winter seasons, when those wonderful veggies seem to be most abundant. As a nutritional bonus, sweet potatoes are loaded with Vitamin A (that good beta-carotene kind) and boast a smattering of other vitamins and minerals. They are even touted as an "antidiabetic" food. Healthy benefits aside, I just love the way they taste.

This year I recommend casting aside tradition, along with the extra sugar and marshmallows, to make room for a simply flavorful roasted sweet potato dish ... such as this one &hellip;

### Roasted Spiced Sweet Potatoes

Recipe altered ever so slightly from [www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)

1 teaspoon coriander seeds  
1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/4-1/2 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes (1/2 teaspoon was a bit too spicy for us)  
2 lb medium sweet potatoes  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Coarsely grind the coriander, fennel, oregano, and red pepper flakes in an electric coffee/spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Stir together spices and salt.

Cut potatoes lengthwise into 1-inch wedges, or into 1-inch chunks.

Lightly grease a large baking dish. Toss the wedges with the oil, spices, and salt, and spread them in an even layer in the baking dish. Bake for 35-40 minutes, checking in every 10-15 minutes to turn the sweet potatoes and keep them from sticking.

Yields 4-6 servings