

Sweet Potato Puree with Pecan Streusel

Serves 10

The pecan streusel topping is what makes this casserole divine. Hot from the oven, the meltingly lush topping is browned to a caramelized crisp at the edges.

for the puree:

5 pounds dark-orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, scrubbed
½ cup butter
¾ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
¾ cup milk, warmed
3 large eggs, lightly beaten

for the streusel topping:

¾ cup coarsely chopped pecans
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
½ teaspoon kosher or sea salt
½ cup butter, melted
½ cup heavy cream

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Pierce each potato several times with a fork and place them in a baking pan. Bake until very tender when pierced with a fork, 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours. Set aside until cool enough to handle. Leave the oven on.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the brown sugar and cook, stirring, until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is bubbly hot. Set aside. Cut the potatoes in half, scoop the flesh into a large bowl, and discard the skins. Mash with a potato masher, or pass the potatoes through a ricer or food mill held over a bowl. Stir the butter mixture into the mashed potatoes. Add the milk and stir until incorporated. Whisk in the eggs until well combined.

Butter a 3-quart oval gratin dish or an 11-inch round oven-to-table casserole. Spread the sweet potato mixture evenly in the casserole. Set aside while making the topping. Raise the oven temperature to 375 degrees.

To make the streusel topping, in a bowl, combine the pecans, flour, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Stir in the melted butter and cream. Spread the streusel topping evenly over the sweet potatoes.

Bake until the potatoes are hot throughout and the topping is nicely browned and crisp, about 40 minutes. Serve immediately.

