

Roasted Veggies

Written by Debbi Covington

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As another wonderful summer comes to an end, I have found myself with an excess of some of our favorite vegetables. Unlike my grandmothers, my mother and my aunts, I never got the knack for canning vegetables. I think after eating jar after jar of gray-colored green beans during my childhood, the idea of “putting up” vegetables just wasn't appealing.

So, it looks like we're going to be eating a lot of grilled and roasted veggies over the next couple of weeks. I love just about anything and everything cooked on the grill. Drizzle some vegetables with a bit of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt and pepper and they're good to go. Roasted vegetables are a newer favorite. Roasting vegetables in the oven concentrates their flavors. Roasted vegetables are great for freezing too, and way better in soups than the canned vegetables from the grocery store. Roasted tomatoes are some of the yummiest vegetables on the planet. They can be used in sauces, on pizza, on salads and in soups, like this week's recipe. Roasting carrots with a bit of brown sugar helps bring out their natural sweetness. My roasted carrot recipe is reminiscent of candied sweet potatoes. Roasted zucchini topped with herbs and parmesan cheese are a real treat. Serve them as a side dish or a pre-dinner snack. Your kitchen is going to smell so good!

Roasted Tomato Soup

2 pounds Campari or plum tomatoes

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

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1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

2 cups chicken stock

½ of 1 small onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

¾ cup milk

¼ cup heavy whipping cream

1 tablespoon ketchup

Salt and pepper, to taste

Fresh Italian parsley, chopped

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Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil for easier clean-up. Halve tomatoes lengthwise, remove the cores and seeds. Arrange the tomatoes on the prepared baking sheet, cut sides up in a single layer. Drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Sprinkle the sugar, salt and pepper over the tomatoes. Roast for 40 to 45 minutes, until the tomatoes are concentrated and beginning to caramelize. Pour chicken stock into a medium sized stock pot over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook in the stock until tender. Stir in roasted tomatoes and remove from heat to cool, about 30 minutes. Place tomato-stock mixture in a food processor and process until smooth. Return tomato mixture to the stock pot over medium-low heat. Add milk, heavy cream and ketchup. Stir to combine and heat until warmed through. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Garnish with freshly chopped Italian parsley before serving. Serves 4.

Sweet Roasted Baby Carrots



1 (16-ounce) bag baby carrots

Boiling salted water, to cover

1/3 cup brown sugar

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2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

¼ cup chopped Italian parsley

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil, add baby carrots and cook until tender, approximately 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet. Drain carrots and place in a bowl. Add brown sugar, melted butter and mustard to the carrots. Toss gently to coat well. Place carrots on prepared baking sheet in a single layer. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes. Garnish with chopped Italian parsley, if desired. Serves 4.



Roasted Parmesan Zucchini

4 zucchini, halved and quartered lengthwise

½ cup grated parmesan cheese

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½ teaspoon dried thyme

½ teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon dried basil

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Salt and black pepper, to taste

2 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a baking rack with nonstick spray and place on a baking sheet. In a small bowl, combine parmesan cheese, thyme, oregano, basil, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Place zucchini on prepared baking rack. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with parmesan mixture. Cook in prepared oven for 15 minutes or until tender. Then, broil for 2 to 3 minutes, until crisp and golden brown. Serves 4.



The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of two cookbooks, Gold Medal Winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award, Celebrate Everything! and Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at dbc@cateringbydebbicovington.com.