

conscious eating



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# SIMPLE SHEET PAN SUPPERS

## Family-Pleasing Holiday Meals

by Judith Fertig

**T**he festive season might signal indulgence, but it also calls for simple, healthy recipes with easy cleanup. We might have friends that drop by, family staying for the weekend or last-minute guests. The simpler we can make meals, the better.

Many chefs and home cooks have found the ideal method: the sheet pan supper. Simply arrange the protein and vegetables on a baking sheet and place it in the oven, where the ingredients burnish to perfection as the flavors concentrate. Experts recommend a heavy duty, 13-by-18-inch sheet pan, also known as a half sheet or a rimmed baking pan. They're available at local cookware shops and box stores that carry kitchenware.

"Sheet pans combine easy prep, process and cleanup, and deliver interesting, sophisticated flavor," says Molly Gilbert, a Seattle chef and the author of *Sheet Pan Suppers: 120 Recipes for Simple, Surprising, Hands-Off Meals Straight from the Oven*.

Yet, even this streamlined cooking method has a few best practices. Carla Snyder, a cookbook author in Hudson, Ohio, lines her sheet pans with unbleached parchment paper for easy cleanup. The author of *One Pan: Whole Family - More than 70 Complete Weeknight Meals* also sprays the liner with olive oil, so food won't stick.

Naomi Pomeroy, a chef in Portland, Oregon, recommends preheating the pan in the oven, and then carefully adding the food. "If you put a room-temperature tray in the oven with, say, Brussels sprouts, it can get steamy, and then they can get soggy," she says.

Gilbert favors groupings of foods that will cook in about the same time, such as fish fillets and tender vegetables for a shorter time, or bone-in chicken and root vegetables that take longer.

## Dinner and Beyond

Sheet pan entrées can serve up meals beyond just dinner, making them a big help during the holidays. Sarah Britton, the Toronto author of *My New Roots: Inspired Plant-Based Recipes for Every Season*, arranges blocks of feta cheese on a sheet pan, surrounds them with fresh bell pepper slices, quartered cherry tomatoes, black olives and preferred herbs. She drizzles it all with olive oil and then bakes at 400 degrees for 20 minutes, just until the cheese is soft. It can be served as an appetizer with whole grain crackers or as an entrée with crusty bread and a salad. The rest can be used as a sandwich filling the next day.

Sheet pan meals can be a gift that keeps on giving.

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In a very large bowl, combine the vinegar with 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Add 2 pinches of salt and the shallot and whisk until the salt dissolves. Whisk in the remaining ¼ cup olive oil and taste for seasoning, adding more vinegar, oil, salt and pepper if needed.

When ready to serve, add the lettuce to the bowl with the dressing and toss to mix.

Divide the dressed lettuce between plates and top with the still warm vegetables, feta cheese and fresh herbs. Grind a little freshly ground black pepper over the top and dig in.

*Reprinted with permission from Carla Snyder's One Pan: Whole Family from Chronicle Books.*

# Surprising Sheet Pan Recipes

## Roasted Vegetable, Feta and Smoked Almond Salad

This salad, packed with tasty browned vegetables, nuts and cheese, really satisfies.

Yields: 4 servings

- 1 medium red onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 zucchini
- 2 red peppers
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 lemon
- 2 Tbsp plus ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp sea salt plus more for sprinkling
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup chopped smoked almonds
- 1 small shallot, peeled and minced
- 1 tsp minced fresh thyme or chives
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- 6 large handfuls of a mix of bibb lettuce, radicchio, romaine or arugula

Preheat the oven to 425° F.

Line a sheet pan with unbleached parchment paper and preheat it in the oven.

On a large cutting board, cut the onion into ½-inch slices, the carrots into ½-inch pieces, the zucchini into 2-inch pieces, the pepper into 2-inch squares, chop the garlic, zest the lemon and transfer it all to a large bowl. Add the 2 tablespoons oil, ½ teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper and toss to coat. Arrange the vegetables on the heated sheet pan and spread them out so that they cook evenly. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes or until tender and lightly browned.

While the vegetables cook, chop the almonds, mince the shallot and thyme, and set aside into separate piles. Squeeze the lemon into a small bowl.

Sprinkle the almonds over the vegetables during the last 5 minutes of cooking to toast them lightly. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly.

## Roasted Arctic Char and Asparagus with Pistachio Gremolata

Pink-fleshed Arctic char is closely related to both salmon and lake trout, with a flavor somewhere between the two. Feel free to substitute with either fish.

Yields: 4 servings

- Olive oil cooking spray
- 1 bunch asparagus (about 1 lb total)
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 boneless filets Arctic char (5 to 6 oz each)
- ½ medium red onion, sliced into ¼-inch thick half-moons
- ½ lemon, sliced into ¼-inch-thick rounds
- ½ cup cherry or grape tomatoes
- Grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup packed fresh, flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- ½ cup roasted, salted and shelled pistachios, roughly chopped

Preheat the oven to 350° F with a rack in the center position.

Mist a sheet pan with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.

Natural Awakenings recommends using organic, non-GMO (genetically modified) and non-bromated ingredients whenever possible.



Using both hands, gently bend one asparagus spear held between fingers and thumbs to snap off the bottom where it breaks easily. Line up the rest of the bunch and slice off the bottoms at the same distance from the tips.

Place the trimmed asparagus on the prepared pan, drizzled with the olive oil, and sprinkle with ½ teaspoon each of the salt and pepper. Toss to coat and spread the asparagus in an even layer.

Place the Arctic char fillets on top of the asparagus, evenly spaced apart and sprinkle with an extra pinch of salt and pepper. Scatter the onion, lemon slices and cherry tomatoes around and on top of the char.

Bake until the asparagus is crisp-tender and the char is almost opaque, 20 to 40 minutes.

While the fish cooks, mix together the lemon zest, garlic, parsley and pistachios in a small bowl; this is the gremolata. Sprinkle it over the char and asparagus before serving warm.

*Recipe courtesy of Molly Gilbert, author of Sheet Pan Suppers.*

## Spaghetti Squash “Noodle” Bowls

Spaghetti squash are those yellow, football-shaped winter squashes. When cooked, the squash’s flesh is easily raked with a fork into long, skinny, noodle-like strands. The squash noodles are faintly sweet and slightly crunchy, like pasta cooked al dente.

Yields: 4 servings

- 2 small spaghetti squash (2 to 3 lbs each)*
- 4 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil*
- ¼ tsp kosher salt*
- ¾ tsp freshly ground black pepper*
- 1 cup chopped cremini or baby bella mushrooms (3 to 5 oz)*
- 1 small shallot, diced*
- 2 cups good quality marinara*
- 15 to 20 small balls fresh mozzarella cheese (bocconcini, about 1¾ oz, sliced in half)*
- 4 to 6 fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped, for garnish*

Preheat the oven to 425° F, with racks in the upper and lower thirds.

Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

Using a very sharp chef’s knife, carefully cut the two spaghetti squash in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop out and discard the seeds.

Place the squash halves, cut side up, on the prepared sheet and drizzle 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over them. Season with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Turn the squash over (skin side up) and bake on the lower rack until the squash has softened significantly and browned at the edges, about 35 to 40 minutes.

Remove from oven and let the squash cool to the touch on the sheet pan.

After putting the squash in to bake, toss together the mushrooms, shallots, remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Arrange the mixture on a separate sheet pan, spreading it out in an even layer.

Bake this second pan on the upper rack until ingredients are soft and start to brown, about 30 minutes.

Remove from the oven and let the mushrooms and shallots cool to the touch on the sheet pan.

Pour the marinara sauce into a large bowl.

When the squash are cool enough to handle, flip them over and use a fork to scrape the flesh from the shells, taking care to leave the shells intact. (These will become the “bowls.”) The result will be long strands of squash “noodles”.

Add the squash strands and the mushrooms to the sauce and stir together to thoroughly combine.

Divide the squash noodle mixture among the empty squash bowls. Place the mozzarella on top.

Bake the squash on the lower rack until the filling is hot and the mozzarella has melted and browned in spots, about 10 minutes.

Serve the squash pasta bowls hot, garnished with the fresh basil.

*Recipe courtesy of Molly Gilbert, author of Sheet Pan Suppers.*

