

Savory Mashed Purple Potato Pie with Garlic Cream Cheese (a.k.a. Galaxy Pie)



Writing about food these days seems extra weird. I mean, I've talked about the privilege of food writing before (and how I struggle with it) but I'm tellin' ya, ever since that election 2 weeks ago . . . boy oh boy, the things I love to do, and I'm talking the trivial things like food blogging and Instagramming, seem sooooooooooooo extra silly. I mean, for the love of Gd, some racists a**holes vandalized a playground dedicated to MCA from the Beastie Boys. A young Muslim student at my graduate alma mater, University of Michigan, was approached by a stranger who threatened to light her on fire if she didn't remove her hijab and a Muslim teacher in Georgia found a letter in her classroom telling her that her "headscarf isn't allowed anymore." The note, scribbled in black ink, also told her to "tie" her headscarf around her

neck and “hang yourself with it.” I mean seriously, world, WTF!? So yeah, you see what I’m getting at with the food thing?





I've been seriously wrestling with how to make sure I don't stand idly by while all this hate is being spewed. I am not a fan (for myself – good for you, not for me but good for you) of Facebook as a means of protest but have been known to post the occasional shocking article or two. That said, Facebook is already saturated with the same articles and I am trying to be mindful of participating in any armchair advocacy. The day after the election I led 6 guided meditation sessions at work for those colleagues of mine who were struggling with the results and that felt good. That felt purposeful and productive. I've got a list of Senators and State Reps. to call though, to be completely transparent, I'm a little nervous to do so as I've never done that before. I've signed up to bake for a bake sale whose profits will go to support causes I believe in but the thing I'm most wrestling with is whether or not to march and if so . . . do I take my daughter? I always imagine myself marching for something I believe in right alongside my own daughter, if I were blessed to have one and now I have two! I came of age marching against

the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I marched for fair wages in Chicago and for the equal rights of the LGBTQ community in Marietta, GA. But, truth be told, I'm scared. I'd love to take my oldest but I'm scared that something bad might happen and then what? Was I marching because I need her to have an experience or because *I* need to have an experience? I really don't know the answer to that question just yet.



Before the bake.



The one thing I have done this week is visit the opening night gala for MAZON's extraordinary installation called, This is Hunger. This Is Hunger is an experiential learning tool whose goal is to bring about community engagement, awareness and education around the issues of hunger in the US. Basically, This Is Hunger is a high-impact, experiential installation on wheels—literally, it's a big rig. When the 53-foot-long double expandable trailer is parked and open on both sides, it provides almost 1,000 square feet of interior space to take participants on a voyage of awareness and activism: to help them understand the stark reality of hunger in America and to spark their commitment to taking action that will help end hunger once and for all.

The big rig is touring LA (locations here) and the country. Tickets are free but do need to be reserved. I hope you are able to make it there. It is astonishingly powerful, provocative and creative and I am so grateful for MAZON and especially Emily for inviting me to attend.



But OK, seriously, this pie!! I had to. I just had to make a purple pie with cheese. I mean, why not? And let's just get

something out-of-the-way . . . I did not make the pie crust. Nope. Not at all. Gang, I have 2 kids, an intense full-time job and my husband is prepping to defend his dissertation. Time is the greatest of currencies and our household these days so if I can present you with a tasty pie that came in a ready-made crust, well so be it. The thing to note about purple potatoes is that they are a lot starchier than russet potatoes so you will need to counteract the starchiness with the moisture of the milk, butter and cheese. Do not worry that you'll lose some of the purple of the potatoes with the additions of the add-ins. The purple becomes more pronounced during baking. Oh, also, I call it "Galaxy Pie" because I had made the moon shape on purpose but once it was baked and I sprinkled the coarse sea salt on the pie, I thought it looked like stars along side the moon against the night sky. No?





Savory Mashed Purple Potato Pie with Garlic Cream Cheese

Ingredients:

2 pounds small purple potatoes, peeled
1 frozen pie crust
1/2 cup of whole milk
1/4 cup (half a stick) butter
2 eggs
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1/2 tablespoon ground black pepper
1/2 tablespoon garlic powder
1 5 oz. package garlic and fine herb Boursin
Maldon or other flaky sea salt for topping

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Make sure your pie crust is mostly defrosted. Once it is, prick the bottom all over with a fork and set aside.

Cook the potatoes in a large pot of boiling salted water until they are very tender, about 20 minutes. Drain; return the

potatoes to the same pot and mash well. Mix in the milk and melted butter. Season with garlic powder, salt and pepper. Add more seasoning depending upon preferred taste.

Crack the eggs into a small bowl and whisk until well combined. Add the eggs to the mashed potato mixture. Now, here's where you can do 1 of 2 things (or both, it's up to you). I made 2 pies for this recipe. 1 pie has 1/2 of the Boursin mixed in and the other has it lovingly dotted along the side as a moon decoration. You can either dump all that Boursin into the potato mixture for an extra creamy, garlicky potato pie OR you can decorate the top of your pie with the Boursin. I let it soften a bit more and then just dotted it along with sides with my fingers. It's totally up to you. Both are delicious options.

Once you've fully prepped your pie, place it into the oven and bake for roughly 20 – 25 minutes. Add a last sprinkling of coarse sea salt (like Maldon) to the top and serve hot.

brisket wedding pie for molly yeh



our girl, molly, is getting married. she's getting married and dang it, i'm coming out of my self-imposed (kind of not self-imposed but LIFE-imposed) blogging hiatus to make her a pie. but not just any pie, brisket pie with honey garlic mashed potatoes and topped with a little broccolini bouquet, you know, to class it up and stuff. and the super coolest part for me? molly and her mama will be recreating this pie for her wedding day. pretty cool, right?

(you'll also notice, to further honor our *kallah*, bride, i've adapted her quirky little habit of only writing in lower case. it's killing me but you know, what we do for friendship).



the story of how little ol' me got asked by THE molly yeh to

make a recipe for her wedding is an interesting one, to me at least. if the food blogging world were a high school, molly would be its queen bee, only she'd be everyone's ideal queen bee; the one that is nice and is inclusive of everyone. the thing is, the food blogging world is a little high school and a lot of the top bloggers who could really be amazing mentors to up-and-comers like me don't actually engage with outside their successful network of fellow bloggers. not miss molly. we became pen pals after she left a comment on my shakshuka recipe from almost a year ago. i was so frikkin' excited that a fellow food blogger, whose talent and skill inspire me so much, had read my blog and commented on it that i immediately emailed my kosher connection gang. one of them, melinda, suggested that i send molly an email thanking her for her comment and telling her how much i admire her work. so i did and, long story short, we've been writing to each other ever since. heck, she even made a cake for my kiddo's 2nd birthday. the least i could do is rep her jewish heritage by putting brisket in pie form.

let's break down this pie. because it's for a wedding (you should know that molly requested only savory pies) and out of the insanely amazing bloggers that she asked (talented folks such as renee shuman of will frolic for food, stephanie le of i am a food blog, izzy hossack of top with cinnamon, and emma galloway of my darling lemon thyme), i'm the only one repping the kosher/jewish crowd. knowing that, i wanted to make sure that the pie was dripping in kosher/jewish wedding, or 'smachot' (hebrew word meaning 'celebrations'), symbolism.

the world knows that jews love to eat, especially when it comes to any kind of jewish celebration of any kind. it's basically your usual, 'ain't no party like a jewish party cause a jewish part has tons of booze and food' situation. but, what the world might not know is that a lot jews believe that there MUST be meat at a celebration or ceremonial meal in order for it to be considered a 'true' celebration. as with a

lot of immigrant communities, our history is steeped in poverty but no matter how little we had (and by 'we', i mean my great, great, great grandparents and so on and so forth), we would make sure that if there was a celebration to be had or a holiday to commemorate, there would be meat. meat came to symbolize celebration and happiness. the same can be said for wine. no holiday meal or celebration is complete without the blessing over the wine, otherwise known as 'kiddush'. in fact, tradition has it that if a single person were to drink from the kiddish cup at a sheva brachot, they would be the next to marry. so, let's just all agree that meat and wine are a big deal for jews.

and finally, the honey. there's yet another custom, this one involving challah and honey. tradition has it that newly weds should dip their challah in honey during the first shabbat meal they spend together so as to guarantee a sweet life together. my husband and i took it one step further and continued that tradition with every shabbat we've ever shared together as a married couple. i mean, also, it's honey and honey is good.

ok, let me get serious for just one moment. it is an honor and a privilege to have been asked to create this post. blogging and having time for myself just doesn't happen these days. this temporary single parent/full-time director of school counseling gig has sucked all my energy/time. i can barely set up a seen for a photo, much less the energy it takes to keep up with it multiple times a month. my viewership has plummeted and my love of cooking has suffered because of it. that being said, this small request has reinvigorated my quest for creativity. whether through tweets, actually reading and commenting on my rare post or telling all of China to check out jewhungry, molly has been 100% supportive throughout my sojourn from blogging by not-so-silently encouraging me to get back out there and i am eternally grateful to her for it. molly is one of the greats. she is living our food blogging

dream. but more than anything, she is living her dream and i wish her and her eggboy all the best for this very inspiring step in their lives. marrying my husband was the #1 best decision i ever made in my life and i am deeply touched by the *kavod*, honor, molly has given me to be a part of this beautiful decision in her life. mazal tov, molly.



brisket ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 large onions sliced into rounds
- 2 – 3 pounds beef brisket
- coarse kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup whole baby carrots
- 1 cup beef/mushroom/vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup red cooking wine (or the real stuff if you're a

baller)

1 tablespoon soy sauce

cooking the brisket:

heat a deep sauté pan over medium heat with the olive oil. add the onions and cook on medium-low to medium heat, stirring frequently, for about 20 minutes or until the onions have caramelized lightly.

while the onions are cooking, take the brisket out of its packaging and pat it dry. season the meat generously with salt and pepper. heat a large skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat and turn on your vent or fan, if you have one. sear the brisket until a golden brown crust appears on both sides of the meat. Remove and place in a slow cooker insert, fatty side up.

sprinkle the minced garlic over the meat. when the onions are lightly browned, pile them on top and around the meat. Mix the broth, worcestershire sauce, and soy sauce, and pour into the slow cooker insert.

cover and cook in the slow cooker on low for 6 to 8 hours or until the brisket is very tender. let the brisket rest for at least 20. using two forks, shred the brisket until there are barely any large chunks. cut up the carrots while you're at it so that they are bite-sized. scoop the meat and carrots into a pie pan with some of the meat juice enough so that there is roughly half a cup or so of meat juice in the pan along with the meat but not so much that it's meat soup.

ingredients for honey garlic mashed potatoes:

3 pounds of yukon gold potatoes (roughly 5 – 6 potatoes)

2 tablespoons kosher salt plus more for seasoning

1 cup almond milk

4 cloves garlic, crushed
3 tbsp earth balance
3 – 4 tbsp honey

cooking the honey garlic mashed potatoes

place the potatoes and garlic in a large stock pot. cover with 1 to 2 inches cold water and season generously with salt. bring the pot of water to a boil and cook until the potatoes are fork-tender, about 20 to 25 minutes. drain out the water from the pot. keep potatoes and garlic in the stock pot and using either a masher or large fork, mash up the potatoes. add the earth balance and almond milk. stir all together with mashed potatoes and garlic. add the honey. if potatoes are not fluffy enough, add a little more almond milk until you reach desired fluffy mashed potato consistency. taste as you go, adjusting seasoning as needed. i like my mashed potatoes a bit sweet to juxtapose the brisket but you should season and flavor yours to your liking.

using a spatula, scoop out mashed potatoes onto brisket in pie pan and smooth. you should have at least a 1/2 in. layer of mashed potato on there. broccolini bouquet is optional. enjoy! mazal tov, molly!

Homemade Black Bean + Cheddar Hot Pockets



I am astonished at how quickly this whole thing is happening. The month of August has come and gone and so has my mom who was here the whole month to help take care of Siona while I was at work. As I type this, my beloved husband is on a plane headed to us for a week of family love time. As much as I am thrilled that he is coming, I can't help shake the thought that he'll be leaving again in just 6 short days. I know that sounds pretty pessimistic and I don't normally have that kind of outlook on life any more, but once we drop him off at the airport again it'll truly just be me and the kiddo.



I swear some of them turned out looking like
Midwestern States . . . and one Georgia.



Now
please don't get me wrong. I'm borderline obsessed with my kid
so it's not the thought of being alone with her that scares me

(although I was singing a different tune when she was a wee baby. Being left alone with her scared the s*%# outta me. Ahh, how unprepared I was). No, it's not being alone. It's the exhaustion. It's always been about the exhaustion. I've learned how to run errands with a two year-old (snacks and books, LOTS of snacks and books). I've learned the fine art of dropping everything in the middle of the aisle and bailing when I feel that a toddler tantrum coming on. I've learned how to do laundry while simultaneously feeding her, vacuuming the apartment and responding to a work email. The thing I haven't learned to do is fight the fear of exhaustion. I go to bed so dang early because I'm scared of being tired with nowhere to run and no one to step in. I know that seems silly but that's my thing. I'd like to stay up passed 9 pm one of these nights. I'd like to start crafting or reading again but I'm so physically and mentally drained that I just can't do it.





Thus, the homemade Hot Pocket. These are so easy and so NOT time consuming. I used to eat the s#%{ outta some Hot Pockets as a broke 20-something year old. It was absolutely normal for me to come home at 3 am from a night out at the club, turn on reruns of Sex and the City (ahhhhhh, 2002), and reach into the freezer for that delicious pocket of chemical cheesiness. The fact that you had to microwave it in a cardboard sleeve should have been a big red flag for me but I was living in DC on \$25k/yr during the height of my Hot Pocketness so this was no time for pickiness. The thing is, I love any food in pocket form and as my beloved friend, Jessie, pictured in this post with my beloved kiddo, pointed out so do most cultures in this world. You got the samosa, the empanada, the krepalch, the pierogi, the dumpling, etc. Food in pocket form is just tasty and since the trashy eater inside of me yearns for a Hot Pocket but the smart, homemade cook inside of me knows that s{*# ain't kosher or good for me I decided to make my own Hot Pocket. And the best news? Thanks to frozen puffed pastry dough, it takes about 10 minutes to make.



Epic pic – Between the creepy baby doll, Siona's neon band-aid and Jessie's boob. EPIC picture.

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