

Sweet Potato Spritz

Nicole A. Taylor

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<https://www.latimes.com/recipe/sweet-potato-spritz>

Time: 5 minutes; Yields: Serves 4



The sweet potato spritz from Nicole A. Taylor's book "Watermelon and Red Birds: A Cookbook for Juneteenth and Black Celebrations" (Beatriz da Costa)

In "Invisible Man," the 1953 National Book Award-winning and bestselling novel by Ralph Ellison, Ellison writes vividly about his protagonist purchasing warm, round, butter-topped sweet potatoes from street cart vendors in Harlem. His description of the no-frills snack is vivid: "I knew that it was sweet before I broke it; bubbles of brown syrup had burst the skin." Reading that made my mouth water and inspired me to create this drink. Make one and start reading Ellison's second novel, "Juneteenth," published in 1999, five years after his death.

Ingredients

8 ounces Aperitivo Cappelletti
3 ounces vodka
2 ounces Sweet Potato Syrup (see recipe below)
16 ounces sparkling wine
4 dehydrated orange slices, for garnish

Preparation

In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine 4 ounces of the Cappelletti, 1½ ounces of the vodka, and 1 ounce of the sweet potato syrup. Stir using a long bar spoon until combined. Strain into two large stemless or stemmed wine glasses over ice and top each with 4 ounces sparkling wine. Repeat to make two additional cocktails. Garnish each cocktail with a dried orange slice.

For the Sweet Potato Syrup

2 cups granulated sugar

2¹/₂ cups water

1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into ¹/₂-inch pieces

¹/₂ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

1 star anise pod

¹/₄ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¹/₂ teaspoon ground cardamom

¹/₄ teaspoon kosher salt

Preparation

1. Combine the sugar, water, sweet potato, vanilla bean, star anise, cinnamon, cardamom and salt in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-low heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring frequently, until the sugar is dissolved and the sweet potato is tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat and allow the sweet potato to steep in the syrup for 1 to 2 hours, until cooled to room temperature. Strain the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve and use the sweet potato for another recipe (it's great on toast). The simple syrup can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to several weeks. Makes 3¹/₂ cups.