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These stuffed sweet potatoes are fun to make and easy to customize for different preferences. (At Elizabeth's Table/Elizabeth Varga)



by Elizabeth Varga

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April 8, 2022

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Editor's Note: *In this series, Elizabeth Varga will explore how fasting from meat impacts our relationships with self, others, the rest of creation and God. Her reflections and recipes will be posted on the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent 2022. To receive this series via email, sign up for EarthBeat Reflections.*

"And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when he heard it, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:10–13)

In the days when Jesus walked on the earth, it was common to have strict societal and religious divides. Tax collectors were considered a low social (and moral) class. No one wanted to interact with them. But Jesus ate with tax collectors anyway.

What does this suggest about Jesus' approach to community?

How can we imitate this approach as we create community for ourselves?

Who is considered less than in today’s world? What communities are marginalized or especially vulnerable?

Jesus intended to love, heal and help people. How can we follow Jesus' example?

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What talents do you possess that you can share? How can you use those talents to create community? How can you welcome Jesus into that community?

Is there a person or group of people in your life that you ignore or neglect? Can you, in humility, invite them into your life?

In solidarity and friendship, can you invite someone for coffee, go on a walk together, cook them a meal or give them a compliment?

Recipe: Crispy chickpea stuffed sweet potatoes

Crisp up some chickpeas in your air fryer or oven, then stuff them into baked sweet potatoes and add your favorite toppings. These stuffed sweet potatoes are fun to make and easy to customize for different preferences.



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Ingredients

- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- lettuce, for topping
- pickled red onions, for topping

Yogurt sauce

- 1/2 cup coconut yogurt
- 1 tablespoon tahini
- 1 tablespoon freeze dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven or air fryer to 400°F.
2. Wrap the sweet potatoes in aluminum foil and bake until soft (around 40 minutes, depending on the exact size of the sweet potato).
3. When the sweet potatoes are cooked, reduce the oven or air fryer temperature to 350°F.
4. Spread the chickpeas on a baking sheet or the rack of your air fryer and sprinkle with cumin, garlic powder and salt. Cook for 5–10 minutes, until crispy. Watch carefully so they don't burn.
5. Combine the yogurt sauce ingredients in a small bowl.
6. Assemble the sweet potatoes. Slice each potato in half and then fill with chickpeas, lettuce and pickled red onions. Drizzle with yogurt sauce. Enjoy!

Find recipe notes, substitutions and other nutritional information on atelizabethstable.com.

This story appears in the **Recipes for an ecofriendly Lent** feature series. View the full series.