

Suran ka Shorba

Indian Spiced Yam Soup

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 4 Large Yams (**Suran**) or Sweet Potatoes (**Shakarkand**)* = apx 4-5lbs - peeled and cubed
- 6 Cups Water - to boil yams/sweet potatoes in
- 4 Tbs Grape Seed Oil (**Draksh-bij Tel**) - can substitute olive or coconut oil
- 1 Small Onion (**Pyaz**) - puréed
- 2 Large Garlic Cloves (**Leh-sun**) - grated into a paste
- ½ inch piece Fresh Ginger (**Adrak**) - grated into a paste
- 15 oz. = 1 Can Un-sweetened Coconut Milk (**Nariyal ka Doodh**)
- 2 Tbs Fenugreek Seeds (**Methi Dana**)
- 2 Tbs Dried Fenugreek Leaves (**Kasuri Methi**) - crushed in hands
- 2 tsp Cumin Seeds (**Jeera**)
- ½ tsp Fennel Seeds (**Saunf**)
- Kosher Salt (**Namak**) to taste
- Fresh Ground Black Pepper (**Kali Mirch**) to taste
- Garam Masala to taste



Preparation:

- 1) Place yam/sweet potato pieces in a large saucepan and cover with water - Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and cook until tender (apx 15 minutes)
- 2) Transfer cooked yam/sweet potato pieces to a blender and process until a smooth paste - Use some of the cooking liquid to help blend and to achieve desired consistency
- 3) Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat - Once oil is hot, add onion and sauté until liquid reduces by about half
- 4) Add garlic and ginger paste and sauté for 1 minute
- 5) Add fenugreek seeds, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, fenugreek leaves, salt and pepper to taste and sauté for an additional minute
- 6) Add the blended yam/sweet potato to saucepan and mix thoroughly
- 7) Add coconut milk and mix thoroughly
- 8) Bring to a simmer and let cook uncovered for 3 – 5 minutes
- 9) Adjust seasoning and serve hot garnished with a pinch of garam masala

* Generally speaking, in the United States, what are sold as 'Yams' are typically the orange fleshed sweet potato while what is sold as the 'Sweet Potato' is the pale fleshed varieties of the same species of plant meaning that you probably have never had a 'True' yam.

'True' yams are not botanically related to sweet potatoes and have brown to black 'bark like' skin and firm flesh that is white, purple, or reddish in color. They are drier and starchier than sweet potatoes and cook up firm and waxy keeping their shape - When cooked, 'true' yams resemble the firm, pale fleshed sweet potatoes more than they do the soft, orange fleshed sweet potatoes commonly marketed as 'Yams' which cook up moist, creamy, and fluffy.

So why the labeling controversy? The firm variety of sweet potatoes were the first to be commercially cultivated in the United States so, as a marketing ploy, when the 'new' soft variety of sweet potato began to be commercially produced, the producers wanted (and claimed a need) to differentiate the two. Due to the slight resemblance (mostly in color) to the 'true' yam, they chose 'Yam' as the moniker for the new variety and it has been used ever since.

Regardless, the 'true' yam and both firm and soft sweet potatoes can be used interchangeably in recipes depending on the final consistency you desire or personal taste. The soft, orange fleshed sweet potato (or 'Yam') is the variety most people prefer for most applications and is the type I suggest you use for this recipe if 'true' yams are not available.