

**The Ten Minute Holiday Meal:  
Roasted Salmon with Lemon-Cumin Raita, Caramelized Fennel with Sherry  
Vinegar, Simple Dijon Potatoes, and Creamed Kale**

The holidays are a time to put the shine on your best silver, if that's what suits you, but it doesn't suit everyone. Me? I didn't always save the pasta-making, reduction-simmering, and bread baking for other times of the year. It used to make sense to stand in the kitchen for hours, talking and stirring. But these days, with an 8-month-old, I'm lucky if I can boil water in one try at 6 p.m. So this year, having guests over will mean simplicity, so there's a chance – even the slightest, skinniest chance – that I'll get to talk to the people hanging out with us in our home.

The following *simple* menu was designed with a 4-person dinner party in mind, to be prepared in a bit over 10 minutes (with dinner about 20 minutes afterward). It doubles easily, but if you do double it, keep in mind that it will take you longer to cut the vegetables, so the salmon might go in later. Luckily, it's hard to overcook the potatoes, fennel, and kale, so let the salmon determine dinnertime – just add the sherry to the fennel right when you start taking things out of the oven, so it has a minute or two to sizzle.

If you can't find Olsen Farms' "Spud Nuts," which are basically ridiculously small potatoes, quarter golf ball-sized potatoes and use them instead. Potatoes simply halved (per the photos above) don't quite cook enough in the time allotted.

And, as always, please READ THROUGH the directions before beginning. The directions assume all produce is washed.

\*

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

**MAKE THE POTATOES:** Grease a shallow roasting pan with **a teaspoon of olive oil**. Toss **1 1/2 pounds Spud Nuts (or quartered small potatoes)** with **2 heaping tablespoons Dijon mustard**, transfer them to the pan, and put them in the oven on the bottom rack.

**MAKE THE FENNEL:** Cut the long green stalks off a **1 1/2 pound fennel bulb** and save to slice into a salad. Cut the fennel in half vertically (with the stripes), then cut each half into 6 or 8 wedges, so the core keeps each wedge intact. Pile the wedges in an ovenproof pan big enough to fit them in one layer, drizzle with **2 teaspoons of olive oil**, season with **salt and pepper**, and mix with your hands until all the fennel is coated. Add to the oven's bottom rack.

**START THE KALE:** Cut **2 small bunches (about 3/4 pound) lacinato (also called dinosaur) kale** crosswise into thin ribbons. Heat **1/2 tablespoon olive oil** in a large, deep

pan over medium heat. Add a **crushed, chopped garlic clove**, stir for a few seconds, then add the kale, and cook, stirring occasionally while you continue.

MAKE THE SAUCE: Stir together the contents of an **8-ounce container full-fat Greek yogurt**, the **zest and juice of a lemon**, **1/2 teaspoon ground cumin**, **salt and pepper** to taste, and if you want, a **chopped clove of garlic**. Set aside to let the flavors marry, as they say.

MAKE THE SALMON: Center a **1 1/2 pound (roughly 1 1/2" thick) salmon filet** on a parchment- or baking mat-lined baking sheet. Smear with **1 teaspoon olive oil**, and season with **salt and pepper**. Bake for 15 minutes or so, or roughly 10 minutes per inch of thickness, until the salmon just begins to exude small white beads of fat (but really not much longer, *please*).

UPKEEP: Add **1 cup heavy cream** and a quick grate of **nutmeg** to the kale, stir, and walk away. Come back in 10 minutes, stir the kale, pour yourself more wine, and sit back down. (The kale is done when the cream's gone, but it's very happy to sit on low heat until you're ready to eat.)

WHEN THE SALMON IS DONE: Add a big splash – **about 1 1/2 tablespoons – sherry vinegar** to the fennel pan, and return to the oven without breathing in too deeply (watch those vinegar fumes). Take the salmon out, and transfer it to a serving platter, along with the sauce. Transfer the kale to a serving bowl. Snuggle the potatoes in next to the salmon. Shake the fennel pan to release the wedges, and add them to the platter, too.

Serve hot.