Black Bean and Cheddar Sweet Potato Halves

2 loaded sweet potato halves; 1 half and half the filling and toppings per serving | Active 13 min | Cook 15 min | Total 30 min

Ingredients

- 1 sweet potato, 350 g (about 12.3 oz), scrubbed and dried
- 160 g (about 5.6 oz) canned black beans, drained and rinsed, ready to eat
- 120 g (about 4.2 oz) ready-to-eat tomato salsa
- 40 g (about 1.4 oz) cheddar, grated
- 20 g (about 0.71 oz) spring onion, finely sliced
- 10 ml (about 2 US tsp) lime juice
- 5 ml (about 1 US tsp) olive oil
- 0.8 g ground cumin, about 1/3 tsp
- 1 g (about 1/8 US tsp plus a small pinch) fine salt, or less if the salsa is salty

Set out

1000 W microwave with turntable, Microwave-safe dinner plate, at least 26 cm (about 10 1/4 in) across, Microwave-safe bowl, 750 ml (about 3.2 US cups) capacity, Microwave-safe vented covers sized for bowl and plate, Fork, Knife and board, Spoon, Kitchen scale and measuring spoon, Food thermometer, Oven mitts

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Prick the sweet potato in 8-10 places with the fork. Set it on the plate; do not wrap in foil. Microwave at 1000 W full power for 4 minutes. Turn it with mitts, then cook another 4-6 minutes until a knife slides through the thickest part easily. Use 30-second extra bursts if necessary. Let it stand on the plate for 3 minutes.

2. While the potato stands outside the oven, stir the beans, salsa, olive oil, cumin and salt in the 750 ml (about 3.2 US cups) bowl. Cover with the vented cover. Microwave at full power for 90 seconds, stir from the bottom, then heat another 60-90 seconds until the filling is hot throughout.

3. Split the potato lengthways into two halves. Fluff the exposed flesh lightly with a fork while keeping the skins intact. Divide all the bean filling between the halves and put 20 g (about 0.71 oz) cheddar over each. Cover the plate loosely with its microwave-safe cover.

4. Microwave at full power for 1-2 minutes, turning the plate halfway through if needed, until the cheese has softened and the center of the filling in both halves reaches 165°F/74°C. Stand covered for 2 minutes. Finish each half with 10 g (about 0.35 oz) spring onion and 5 ml (about 1 US tsp) lime juice. Serve one complete half per person.

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The plate must turn freely

Check the 26 cm (about 10 1/4 in) plate fits your oven and can rotate before cooking. A plate jammed against the wall changes the heating pattern.

Packing a later lunch

Refrigerate the cooked portions promptly. Carry cold with ice packs and reheat at the destination; the 30-minute ready-to-eat clock does not include chilling for travel.

Ingredient labels

Check salsa and any plant-based cheese for wheat, soy, milk or nut ingredients.

A useful detail

The 30-minute total allows up to 10 minutes for the potato, up to 3 minutes for the filling, 2 minutes for the final melt and the covered stand. The filling heats during the potato’s 3-minute stand; there is one oven and the heating stages remain sequential. A thicker potato may extend the estimate. Times are starting ranges for a 1000 W microwave. Use the stated power setting, stir and turn as directed, and use the food endpoint rather than the clock alone. A different wattage or bowl shape may need additional short bursts.

Another way

Use 160 g (about 5.6 oz) drained ready-to-eat canned kidney beans instead of black beans; do not substitute raw or merely soaked dried beans.

Replace the cheddar with 40 g (about 1.4 oz) grated plant-based melting cheese. Check its milk, soy and nut labels; keep the same complete hot-filling endpoint.

Keep it well

Cool leftover filled halves in shallow covered containers and refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or colder. Use within 3 days. Reheat one half covered in short bursts, turn midway and check 165°F/74°C in several places; stand covered 2 minutes. Keep unused spring onion cold separately.