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Sweet Potatoes

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

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Sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas*, is a tender, warm-weather vegetable that requires a long frost-free growing season to mature large, useful roots. Sweet potato is native to Central and South America.

Utah Local Fresh Season: Fall

Availability: Sweet potatoes are available year round, but they are best in the fall.

Eating: Sweet potatoes can be used in place of almost anything that potatoes are used for. They have a sweeter taste than regular potatoes.

Selecting: For best quality select round, firm potatoes without any bruises. Deeper colored varieties are usually better tasting. There are two main varieties of sweet potatoes. One has a thin, light yellow skin with pale yellow flesh which is not sweet and has a dry, crumbly texture (dry-flesh) similar to a white baking potato. The darker-skinned variety has a thicker, dark orange to reddish skin with a vivid orange, sweet flesh and a moist texture (Moist-flesh).

Cleaning and Preparing: Clean potatoes with warm water and scrub with a vegetable brush, or peel the skin before preparing. Leaving the skins on gives you a different texture and more fiber in your meals.

Storing: Fresh sweet potatoes generally do not store well, except under ideal conditions, and

bruised ones rapidly deteriorate. Kept in a dry, dark, cool (55°F) place, sweet potatoes will last up to 3 to 4 weeks. It is best to plan on using within 1 week of purchase and do not refrigerate. Refrigeration will cause the core to harden and make the vegetable bitter.

Cooking: Sweet potatoes can be baked, boiled, fried, broiled, canned or frozen. They can also be cooked in the microwave oven. Try making sweet potato fries or eating sweet potatoes the same ways you would eat regular potatoes.

Microwave: Pierce potato several times to prevent explosion. Place potato on a microwave safe dish and microwave for several minutes, until tender and easily pierced with a fork. Turn potato over half way through cooking for more even cooking.

Bake: Wash and pierce potato with a fork. Rub a small amount of vegetable oil over the skin of the sweet potato. Place on baking sheet and bake at 400°F for 15 minutes. Reduce temp to 375°F and bake for 45 more minutes or until potato is easily pierced with a fork.

Nutrition Highlights: Sweet potatoes are fat free, low in sodium, cholesterol free, a good source of dietary fiber, high in vitamin A and C, and a good source of potassium.

Growing: For information on how to grow sweet potatoes refer to *Sweet Potatoes in the Garden*, by Jeran Farley and Dan Drost. Available at: <http://extension.usu.edu/juab/files/uploads/Horticulture/vegetable%20garden/sweetpotato2006-10.pdf>

Preserving: Sweet potato chunks may be home canned in a pressure canner. Cooked potatoes may be frozen and drying sweet potatoes will result in a fair product. See this site for more information: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>

References:

1. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/sweetpotato.cfm>
2. [https://extension.usu.edu/fsne/files/uploads/2010%20forms/Viva%20Vegetables%20Newsletter/English/1-11%20sweet%20potato%20final%20F\\$NE%20NOVEMBER.pdf](https://extension.usu.edu/fsne/files/uploads/2010%20forms/Viva%20Vegetables%20Newsletter/English/1-11%20sweet%20potato%20final%20F$NE%20NOVEMBER.pdf)
3. <http://extension.usu.edu/juab/files/uploads/Horticulture/vegetable%20garden/sweetpotato2006-10.pdf>
4. <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp>

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Stuff It! Sweet Potatoes

From the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission

- 6 medium sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup softened butter or tub margarine
- 1/4 cup chopped toasted almonds
- 1 T grated orange peel
- 2 T maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Wash and dry sweet potatoes. Bake at 425° for 40 minutes or until tender. Cut a lengthwise slice from the top of each sweet potato. Remove skin from slice and place meat of sweet potato in bowl. Gently scoop out sweet potatoes leaving 1/4 inch shell. Place in bowl. Add remaining ingredients; blend well. Pipe or spoon into reserved shells. Arrange on baking sheet. Bake uncovered at 425° for 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

Sweet Potato Sandwich Wraps

Adapted from the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission

- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1/2 tsp chopped garlic
- 2 T lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Pepper, to taste
- 1/4 tsp thyme
- 1/4 tsp basil
- 4-10 inch flour tortillas
- 8 slices turkey breast
- 1 large ripe tomato, thinly sliced
- 1 avocado, pitted and sliced

Boil sweet potato until softened. Remove skin and puree in food processor. Stir in garlic, lemon juice and seasonings and set aside to cool. Spread puree to 1/2 inch of the edges of the tortillas. Add toppings and roll each tortilla.