

November: Sweet Potato Awareness Month

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Sweet potatoes can add color, sweetness, and nutrients to meals, side dishes, and snacks. There are a variety of ways to enjoy sweet potatoes, from baking or boiling to mashing and roasting. They are a great ingredient to use in fall and winter dishes. You can eat them as fries, grill them, use them as a salad topper, a sweet side dish, cube them for soups and stews, or enjoy them as chips.



November is Sweet Potato Awareness Month. Check out the following tips and information on buying, storing, and adding sweet potatoes to a healthful eating plan. *Photo by Scott Bauer.*

Tips for Selection, Storage, and Preparation

Nutrition and health: Sweet potatoes are fat-free, low in sodium, cholesterol free, a good source of dietary fiber and potassium, and high in vitamins A and C. Taste the sweet goodness that sweet potatoes naturally have, and keep the additions like butter to a minimum. A medium sweet potato (about 2 inches in diameter and 5 inches long) is around 100 calories when baked in the skin.



Selection and storage tips: Choose firm, small- to medium-sized potatoes with smooth skin. Avoid cracks, soft spots and blemishes. Choose sweet potatoes with a bright, uniform color. Store them in a cool, dark, dry place for use within two to four weeks or at room temperature for up to a week. Avoid storing in the refrigerator, which will result in a hard center and unpleasant taste.



Cleaning and preparing: Before cooking, wash sweet potatoes with cool, running water to remove any dirt from the skin and scrub with a vegetable brush if needed. It is not necessary to peel sweet potatoes before cooking them; leaving the skins on gives you a different texture and more fiber in meals, side dishes, and snacks.

Cooking with sweet potatoes: They can be baked, boiled, fried, broiled, and microwaved. They can also be peeled, cut into chunks and sautéed. When cooking whole sweet potatoes pierce their skin several times with a fork and bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit (F) for 40-50 minutes, or until fork tender. Sauté sliced or diced sweet potatoes in oil for about 10 minutes. Grill or broil 1-inch thick slices for 10 minutes or cut sweet potatoes in half lengthwise and grill 20 to 25 minutes. When microwaving, pierce several times with a fork and place on a microwave-safe dish. Microwave whole sweet potatoes for 5 to 8 minutes, rotating halfway through.



Great additions to meals and side dishes: Sweet potatoes can be prepared with sweet or savory flavors and go well with meats, fruits, and other vegetables. Here are some examples of interesting



ways to incorporate sweet potatoes: Toss sliced sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower in olive oil and salt and bake until tender; sauté peppers, onions and sweet potato cubes for taco filling; add roasted sweet potato wedges to your favorite grilled meat; or add roasted sweet potato cubes to a soup recipe.



For more nutrition and health information from UNL Extension go to www.food.unl.edu or scan the QR code with your electronic device.

Recipe Ideas with Sweet Potatoes!

Orange & Sweet Potato Pork Chops (Makes 2 servings):

- **Ingredients:** 2 pork chops, 1 sweet potato (peeled), 1/2 orange (sliced), 1 dash cinnamon, 1 dash salt (optional), and 1 dash black pepper (optional).
- **Directions:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium skillet, brown pork chops in a small amount of oil. Cut sweet potato into 1/2-inch slices. Place meat and sweet potato slices in a baking dish and top with orange slices; sprinkle with seasonings. Cover and bake for 1 hour until meat is tender. Pork is safely cooked when it has been heated to 145 degrees F, followed by a 3 minute rest time.
- **Source:** <http://food.unl.edu/orange-sweet-potato-pork-chops>

Sweet Potato & Apple Casserole (Makes 2-4 servings):

- **Ingredients:** 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch cubes, 1 apple, with its skin; sliced, 1/4 cup orange juice, 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar, 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, and 1/3 cup dried cranberries or raisins.
- **Directions:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease or spray with nonstick cooking spray a 1-1/2 quart casserole dish. In a small sauce pan over medium heat, mix together the orange juice, brown sugar, butter or margarine, cinnamon and dried cranberries or raisins. Heat and continue to stir until the sugar is dissolved and the margarine is melted. In a large bowl, mix together the potatoes, apples and orange juice mixture. Transfer to a casserole dish. Bake, covered, for one hour or until the potatoes are fork tender. Stir the mixture before serving to coat the sweet potatoes and apples with the juices accumulated at the bottom.
- **Source:** <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/apples-anytime>

Additional Resources & Links:

- **Make Quick Work of Mashing Sweet Potatoes with a Potato Ricer.** The only other ingredients you need in this version of mashed sweet potatoes are orange juice and cinnamon. <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/mashed-sweetpotatoes>
- **Roasted Root Vegetables.** Roasting root vegetables adds a delightful sweet taste. Cut vegetables into chunks that are similar in size so they will finish roasting at the same time. <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/roasted-root-vegetables>
- **UNL Extension Calendar** – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for November. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/november>

Sources:

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