SWEET POTATO

Home Grown History

Domesticated sweet potatoes originated in Central and South America nearly 5,000 years ago and gradually spread to Mexico, the Caribbean, the West Indies, and parts of North America. When Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean in 1492, the Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes. Columbus brought the sweet potatoes back to Europe and the Spanish began cultivating them.

The sweet potato was a main source of nourishment for early American homesteaders and for soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War. The Pilgrims and Native Americans are thought to have eaten sweet potatoes at the first Thanksgiving feast. Today, sweet potatoes are commonly grown and eaten in the southern U.S., but the Irish potato remains more popular in the North likely due in part to the suboptimal sweet potato growing conditions observed in the northern part of the nation. However, as new cultivars of sweet potatoes are produced and the growing season continues to be lengthened through technology, Wisconsin farmers are starting to include sweet potatoes in their crops.

Many people call sweet potatoes yams, but yams and sweet potatoes are different foods. In fact, they are not even closely related as they are from different plant families. Yams are large, starchy roots grown in Africa and Asia and not typically available in American grocery stores. Yams are starchier and drier than sweet potatoes and have less fiber, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

Healthy Serving Hints

- Make chips by thinly slicing and baking for 15 minutes at 350°F.
- Add cooked, diced sweet potatoes to salads.
- Steam and mash for an easy side dish.
- Whip up sweet potatoes pancakes for breakfast.
- Drizzle with maple syrup and cinnamon to satisfy your sweet tooth.
- Mix together mashed sweet potato, Greek yogurt, and honey for a tasty dip.

Picking Produce

Select firm sweet potatoes that do not have any soft spots, cracks, or bruises. Avoid those that are kept in the refrigerated section of the produce department. Sweet potatoes should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place and will stay good up to ten days.

This month, cranberries were purchased from:

Baked Honey Sweet Potato

Makes 2-4 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 4 tsp honey
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 tsp ground ginger
- Nutmeg to taste

Directions:

1. Wrap sweet potatoes in foil and bake at 500°F for 20 minutes.
2. Lower oven temperature to 400° and bake until tender.
3. Let potato cool, cut in half, and scoop out middle. Do not discard shells.
4. Add honey, cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg to baked sweet potato flesh.
5. Beat mixture until smooth and spoon into shells.
6. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes and serve.

Recipe retrieved from http://www.sweetpotato.org/side-dishes/

Health Benefits

Don't let the bad rap that white potatoes often get steer you away from the nutrient-rich sweet potato! This Thanksgiving favorite is a versatile food that contains an abundance of health benefits. Perhaps after reading more about this underrated vegetable you will deiced it should make an appearance on your plate more than once a year. Just one medium sweet potato contains more than twice the amount of vitamin A that is recommended for the day. Not to mention, this root vegetable is also a very good source of vitamin C, manganese, copper, and the B vitamins—all nutrients that we need daily to achieve optimal health.

Fun Facts

- To take in the amount of vitamin A that is in one sweet potato you would have to eat 23 cups of broccoli.
- A favorite of herbivore (plant-eating) dinosaurs, sweet potatoes have been around since prehistoric times.
- George Washington, our first American President, was a sweet potato farmer before he became our President.

How many vegetables do I need?

Children 2-3 years	Children 4-8 years	Females 9-13 years	Females 14-50 years	Females 51+ years	Males 9-13 years	Males 14-50 years	Males 51+ years
1 cup	1 ½ cups	2 cups	2 ½ cups	2 cups	2 ½ cups	3 cups	2 ½ cups

The amount of fruit and vegetables you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. These are average recommended daily amounts for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity. Individuals may require more or less than the recommend daily amounts depending on lifestyle and health conditions.

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