



Sweet Potatoes for Good Health

Sweet potatoes are edible roots, not tubers like potatoes. In fact sweet potatoes are not even related to potatoes, they are a member of the morning glory family.



In spite of the natural sweet flavor and outstanding nutritional value sweet potatoes are often eaten only at Thanksgiving with lots of brown sugar, butter and marshmallows. Sweet potatoes can be eaten at any time of the year, but are especially good in the fall. They can be prepared in a variety of healthy ways as a main dish, side dish or dessert.

The sweet potato is a nutritious as well as a tasty food. One baked sweet potato (3-1/2 ounce serving) provides two times the amount of vitamin A needed for a day, but contains only 141 calories. Sweet potatoes are also a good source of vitamin C, iron, thiamine, potassium, vitamin E, and fiber.

Tips for Selecting and Using Sweet Potatoes

- Choose sweet potatoes that are smooth, hard, and free of bruises or decay.

- Store in a cool, dry place - 55° to 60° F. Never refrigerate, they may develop a hard core and an “off” taste. They will keep for a month or more at the recommended temperature. At room temperature they should be used within a week.
- Brush off any excess dirt before storing. Don’t wash until you are ready to use.
- Scrub the potatoes under cold running water before cooking.

Serving Suggestions

- Make a multi-potato salad with cubes of cooked sweet potatoes as well as white potatoes.
- Add shredded raw sweet potato to hamburger, meatloaf and meatball mixtures.
- Stir cubes of sweet potato into chili.
- Sweet potatoes can be baked, boiled, fried, broiled or baked in the microwave oven.



Sweet Potato or Yam

It is inevitable when this vegetable is discussed that the question will be asked is it 'sweet potato' or 'yam'? Sweet potatoes are moist-fleshed with a dark red-brown skin with orange to deep-orange flesh commonly found in our markets. Yams are large (up to 100 pounds) root vegetables grown in Africa, South America and the Caribbean. True yams are very rarely seen in our markets. Common usage has made the term 'yam' acceptable when referring to sweet potatoes. The United States Department of agriculture requires that the label 'yam' always be accompanied by the term 'sweet potato', but this does not always happen.



Prepared by: Barbara Farner, Extension Educator
Nutrition and Wellness
Matteson Center



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION
FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM

Ham and Sweet Potato Dinner

1-½ pounds sliced cooked ham
1 cup pineapple juice
½ cup softened raisins
½ cup brown sugar
4 sweet potatoes, partially cooked, peeled and cut in half
8 pineapple slices

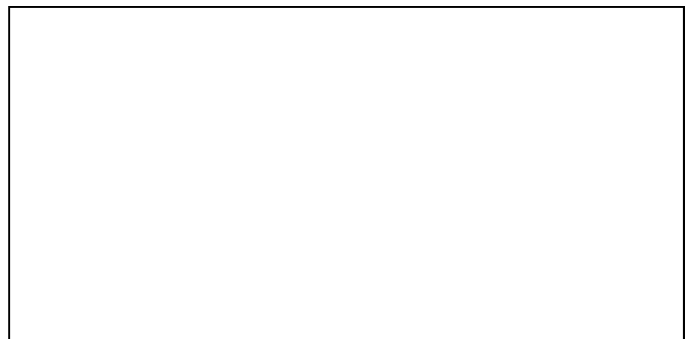
To soften raisins place in a small bowl and cover with hot water, let sit 15 to 20 minutes and drain.

To partially cook sweet potatoes – pierce and cook whole in the microwave on high for 5 to 8 minutes or in the conventional oven at 375°F for 30 minutes, or peel, cut in half, cover with water and boil for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place ham slices in 9x13 inch pan. Add pineapple juice, softened raisins, brown sugar and sweet potatoes. Top with pineapple. Bake at 375°F until the potatoes and pineapple brown.

Serves 8

Nutrition information per serving: 370 calories, 7 g fat, 1220 mg sodium, 56 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, and 350% daily recommended amount of vitamin A.



Sweet Potato or Yam

It is inevitable when this vegetable is discussed that the question will be asked is it 'sweet potato' or 'yam'? Sweet potatoes are moist-fleshed with a dark red-brown skin with orange to deep-orange flesh commonly found in our markets. Yams are large (up to 100 pounds) root vegetables grown in Africa, South America and the Caribbean. True yams are very rarely seen in our markets. Common usage has made the term 'yam' acceptable when referring to sweet potatoes. The United States Department of agriculture requires that the label 'yam' always be accompanied by the term 'sweet potato', but this does not always happen.



Prepared by: Barbara Farner, Extension Educator
Nutrition and Wellness
Matteson Center



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION
FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM

Sweet Potato Pie

1 pound sweet potatoes
1/3 cup butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup low fat milk
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 (9-inch) unbaked pie crust



Boil sweet potatoes whole in skin for 40 to 50 minutes, or until done. Run cold water over the sweet potatoes and remove the skin.

Break apart sweet potatoes in a bowl. Add butter and mix well with mixer. Stir in sugar, milk, eggs, nutmeg, cinnamon and vanilla. Beat on medium speed until mixture is smooth. Pour filling into an unbaked pie crust.

Bake at 350°F for 55 to 60 minutes, or until knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Serves 8.

Nutrition information per serving: 360 calories, 17 g fat, 75 mg cholesterol, 190 mg sodium, 2 g fiber and 170% daily recommended amount of vitamin A.

