

# SWEET POTATOES

## FAST FACTS

- Sweet potatoes are root vegetables
- They are rich in fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, niacin, and potassium
- Sweet potatoes were first cultivated over 5,000 years ago in Central and South America
- This root vegetable is in season December–March
- Sweet potatoes are different from *yams*, which are a lighter, longer, and starchier



## IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS

- **Fiber** – good for your gut and heart
- **Vitamin A** – good for your eyes, skin, and immune system
- **Vitamin C** – helps with wound healing
- **Potassium and magnesium** – needed for muscle contraction
- **Niacin (or vitamin B6)** – needed for energy metabolism and helps keep your brain and blood vessels healthy

## SELECTION & STORAGE

Small- or medium-sized tend to be sweeter and creamier, while large sweet potatoes are starchier.

Store uncooked sweet potatoes in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place (not the fridge) for up to two weeks. Cooked sweet potatoes can be stored 3–5 days in an airtight container in the fridge.

## IDEAS FOR SERVING

- Sweet potatoes should be cooked – try them baked, roasted, or boiled!
- Try mashed or spiralized sweet potatoes for a fun twist!

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## ACTIVITIES

### **Five Senses Fun!**

Use your five senses to describe how sweet potatoes look, feel, taste, sound, and smell.

### **Measure Up**

Measure the circumference of your sweet potato (whole potato or pieces).

### **Compare & Contrast**

Make a list of similarities and a list of differences between sweet potatoes and white potatoes. How are they similar? What are the key differences?

### **Poetry**

Write a poem about the health benefits of sweet potato. Share with the class!

### **Write a Recipe**

Invent a new recipe that includes sweet potato as one of the ingredients.

### **Watch a Video**

Find and watch a video online that shows how sweet potato is grown, harvested, and distributed in the United States.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

**What are some examples of other root vegetables?**

**When should you plant a sweet potato? When are they in season?**

**Why is eating sweet potato good for your health?**

**What should you look for when selecting sweet potato at the store?**

**What is your favorite way to eat sweet potato?**

## REFERENCES

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. (2005). <https://web.archive.org/web/20050207230303/http://www.cgiar.org/impact/research/sweetpotato.htm>

Arizona Farm Bureau. (n.d.). Arizona Produce in Season. <https://fillyourplate.org/produce-season.html>