

Fruite and Vegetable Guide Series: Sweet Potatoes



Sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas*, is a tender, warmweather 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: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/265/

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/>

Recipes

[Sweet Potato Fries](#)

[Sweet Potato and Black Bean Quesadillas](#)

References

- <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/veggies/sweetpotato.cfm>
- <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>

Authors

Carolyn Washburn, Extension Associate Professor

**This publication is a part of a series created by Create Better Health and Utah State Extension Employees. It has been reviewed and updated to include current evidence-based research and recommendations.*