CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

TASTEFUL HARVEST

SWEET POTATOES

Healthy Nutrition and Learning Success

The classroom is one of the best places to teach students about the importance of eating healthy and being physically active. Studies show a relationship between good nutrition and academic performance. Tasteful Harvest connects with core curricula and links the classroom, cafeteria, and families.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1/2 cup (100g)

Calories 90	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturdated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 35mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 6g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 380%	Calcium 4%
Vitamin C 35%	Iron 4%

EXPLORING OKLAHOMA SWEET POTATOES: TASTE TESTING

What You Will Need (per group of 6-8 students):

- Two raw sweet potatoes cubed;
- Two baked sweet potatoes
- One can of sweet potatoes
- AITC Commodity map of Oklahoma
- Nutrition Facts labels for raw, baked, and canned sweet potatoes
- Pencils and paper

Activity:

- Taste raw, dry flesh sweet potato and describe the texture, smell, color, and taste. Locate on the commodity map where sweet potatoes are grown.
- Taste the baked and canned sweet potatoes.
- Discuss what affects the flesh color and texture (e.g., altitude, temperature, climate, weather).
- Compare the Nutrition Facts labels for the different varieties.
- Which nutrient values are similar and different? Why?
- What is the difference in taste between the raw, baked, and canned sweet potatoes? Which is the students' favorite?

Adapted from: https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Winter/SweetPotatoes/Sweet%20Potatoes%20-%20Educator%27s%20Newsletter_Final.pdf

COOKING IN THE CLASSROOM: PARADISE SWEET POTATOES

Makes 36 servings at 1 piece of sweet potato and pineapple per serving.

Ingredients:

- 2 (15-ounce) cans sweet potatoes in light syrup, drained
- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple chunks in 100% juice, drained (reserve ¼ cup juice)
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

Directions:

Combine sweet potatoes, pineapple, cinnamon, and reserved juice in a large bowl. Mix thoroughly. Place one sweet potato and one pineapple chunk on each paper plate. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving:Calories 36, Carbohydrate 9 g, Dietary Fiber 1 g, Protein 0 g, Total Fat 0 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Total Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 9 mgAdapted from: Tasting Trio Team, Network for a Healthy California,2010

ABOUT SWEET POTATOES

- Sweet potatoes are members of the morning glory family and native to the American tropics.
- Today sweet potatoes are used in cuisines all over the world as a satisfying and versatile vegetable with a well-earned reputation for nutrition.
- Sweet potatoes are not the same as yams, which are native to Africa and Asia and are starchier and drier than sweet potatoes.
- They are a winter crop, so they provide fresh vegetables when many other vegetables are unavailable.
- A sweet potato is a root tuber, a fleshy root that stores food for a plant.
- Sweet potatoes are an important source of beta carotene, an organic compound that helps to prevent Vitamin A deficiency.
- Sweet potatoes are propagated from sprouts or vine cuttings called “slips.”
- Sweet potatoes are one of the richest plant sources of beta carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A
- Antioxidants, like carotenoids, help keep the immune system healthy, the body safe from free radicals and may lower the risk of some types of cancer.

STICK TO THE FACTS

- Sweet potato is a nutritious root crop that contains significant amounts of fiber, beta carotene and vitamin C, particularly in varieties with highly colored roots.
- When sweet potato is managed properly, it has the potential to be one of the more profitable vegetable crops grown in Oklahoma.
- Even with the use of mechanical harvesters and other production technology, labor requirements are about 60 man-hours per acre.
- Sweet potatoes produce best in a well-drained, light, sandy loam or silt loam soil.

STUDENT DISCOVERY: MAP THE HISTORY OF SWEET POTATOES

Materials

- Copy of world map for each student (last page of this newsletter)
- One copy of the Sweet Potatoes Mapping Directions to project, or one copy per student
- Atlas for each student or pair of students
- Colored pencils

Procedure

- Pass out copies of the world map to each student.
- Project or pass out the Sweet Potatoes Mapping Directions.
- Instruct students to follow the directions to map the history of sweet potatoes!

Resource: https://www.nhharvestofthemonth.org/uploads/8/7/7/2/87724720/finalhom_nov_sweet_potatoes_lesson.pdf

Sweet Potato Mapping Directions

Sweet Potatoes first grew in Peru as early as 750BC. That’s a long time ago.
#1: On your map, color Peru in green.

Christopher Columbus and other early explorers found Native Americans growing sweet potatoes and brought it with them back to Europe where it spread and is still grown today.
#2: On your map, color Europe in orange.

North Carolina is the top-producing state of sweet potatoes.
#3: On your map, draw a black star near North Carolina.

Sweet potatoes are grown all over the world today. China grows the most sweet potatoes today.
#4: On your map, color China red to highlight where the most sweet potatoes comes from.

LESSON ACTIVITIES

History Exploration:
Ask students to research and write a report on the many medical and industrial uses of sweet potatoes throughout history.

Problem Solving:
Use the nutrient content of sweet potatoes in math problems.

Example:
In order to get the same amount of vitamin A that is contained in one medium sweet potato, a person would have to consume 23 cups of broccoli. How many sweet potatoes would it take to fulfill the same requirements as 100 cups of broccoli? How much vitamin A, vitamin C, and fiber would there be?

For more ideas, reference: *www.nal.usda.gov/kids* and *www.agclassroom.org*

Other Lesson Ideas:
Nutrition Lesson - PK-8
https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5ddc2d9103e2b3132ccd1731

The Great Plant Escape - 4-5
https://www.web.extension.illinois.edu/gpe/case5/c5hgi.html

SCHOOL GARDEN: ROOT PLANTS

If your school has a garden, here is an activity you may want to implement. Look for donations to cover the cost of seeds, tools, irrigation systems, electric pumps, and any salary incurred by garden educators or others.

Sweet potatoes are root plants. The root is the part of the plant that absorbs water and nutrients from the soil and anchors the plant in the ground. Bring in a variety of root vegetables to the classroom, such as sweet potatoes, potatoes, and carrots and pass around to students.

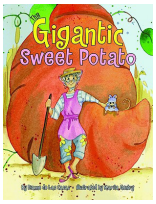
- Identify each vegetable, discuss the color, texture, smell, and taste.
- Talk about how they are grown.
- Discuss and compare the nutrients* of each and why it is important for us to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Brainstorm other root vegetables that we eat.

*Download Nutrition Facts labels for Sweet Potatoes and Root Vegetables from www.harvestofthemonth.com.

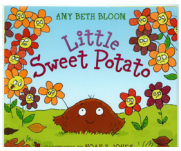
Take It Further:
- Visit the school garden and have students identify root vegetables and the nutrients they provide. Grow sweet potato plants from a sweet potato.
- Cut up a sweet potato to include an 'eye' and plant in moist soil or potting soil

For more ideas, visit: www.ncsweetpotatoes.com

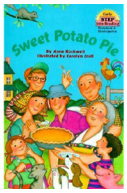
LITERATURE CONNECTIONS



Gigantic Sweet Potato by Dianne De Las Casas



Little Sweet Potato by Amy Beth Bloom



Sweet Potato Pie by Anne Rockwell

Sweet Potato Pete and The Green Gard Gang by Art Ehrens

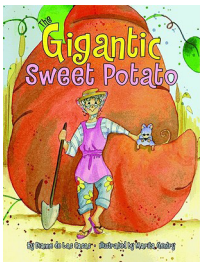
HISTORY OF SWEET POTATOES

Sweet potatoes are believed to have been domesticated in Central and South America nearly 5,000 years ago. They then spread to Mexico, the Caribbean, the West Indies, and parts of North America.

When Christopher Columbus landed on America's shores in 1492, the Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes. Columbus and his men loved the tasty sweet potatoes so much that they brought them back to Europe to grow their own, where they continued to increase in popularity.

In the United States, the sweet potato was a main source of nourishment for early homesteaders and for soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War. The Pilgrims and Native Americans even ate sweet potatoes at the first Thanksgiving feast.

FARM TO ECE
EARLY CARE EDUCATION



After weeks of hard work and tending to her garden, it was finally time for Ma Farmer to harvest her sweet potato and make some sweet potato pie; but when she tried to pull the tasty vegetable from the ground, it wouldn't budge. With the help of her husband and some friendly farm animals, they finally pull a gigantic sweet potato from the ground and then all enjoy the sweet potato pie Ma Farmer prepares. This story teaches the importance of team work, patience, and eating healthy, local food!

Complete lessons and activities: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/PF_CACFP_HfHK_Potatoes_and_Sweet_Potatoes_Activity_Plan.pdf

WATCH OUR GARDEN GROW

Objectives:

1. Children learn that we can grow sweet potatoes in a garden.
2. Children review how sweet potatoes grow.
3. Children make their own sweet potato to display in the classroom "garden".

What You Might Need:

Small paper plates
Colored paper, yarn, paint, or other art supplies
Scissors
Glue

What You Might Do:

- Make a sweet potato using colored paper. Cut out a sweet potato shape and past green "leaves."
- Prepare paper sweet potatoes and leaves for children.
- Tell children: we can grow sweet potatoes in a garden. Ask children if anyone has ever grown sweet potatoes in a garden.
- Ask children to remember how sweet potatoes grow (the potato grows under the ground; the leaves grow above the ground).
- Show children an example paper sweet potato and tell children today we will be making sweet potatoes for our "class garden."
- Provide children with pre-cut paper "sweet potatoes," "leaves," and glue.
- Invite children to make their own sweet potato for the "class garden"

CAFETERIA CONNECTIONS

- Encourage the kids to hold a Placemat Contest between classrooms.
- Use categories to help create interest, such as Most Creative, Most Festive, and Most Informational.
- Ask staff and older students to help judge the entries. Have student judges create a cafeteria bulletin board to display the placemats for a week.
- Consider awarding prizes in each category by grade level.
- Students can then donate the placemats to day care centers or homes for the holiday meals.

For more ideas, reference: Fruits and Vegetables Galore, USDA, 2004.

WORLD MAP

NAME _____