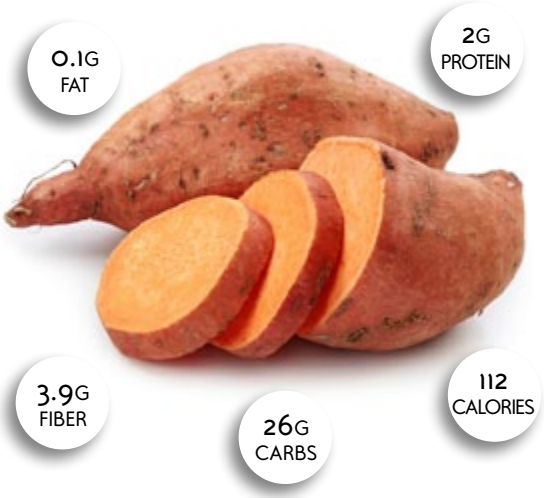
FAMILY CONNECTIONS

SWEET POTATO

TASTEFUL HARVEST

Healthy Nutrition and Learning Success

Oklahoma farmers' markets offer a colorful variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eating fruits and vegetables every day can give your family the nutrients they need to grow strong and build healthy bodies and minds. This resource, Tasteful Harvest can help your family learn how to eat healthy and be physically active every day.



✓Cholesterol-Free ✓Low-Sodium
✓Good Source of Fiber ✓Fat-Free
✓ Gluten-Free

Rich in vitamins and nutrients, sweet potatoes are an excellent healthy food choice that can be prepared in a variety of ways

HOW TO PICK THE BEST

- Choose firm, dark, dry, and smooth sweet potatoes without wrinkles, bruises, sprouts, or moldy spots. One decayed spot can make the entire sweet potato taste bad, even when cut away.
- Do not store sweet potatoes in the refrigerator. To keep fresh, store in a dry, cool place, like a pantry or garage.
- Do not wash sweet potatoes until you are ready to cook them.
- At room temperature, sweet potatoes should be used within one week. If stored properly, sweet potatoes can keep for one month or longer.

HEALTHY SERVING SUGGESTIONS

- Instead of potato chips, peel and slice raw sweet potatoes and serve with a fat free dip for a healthy snack.
- Dip strips of sweet potatoes in egg substitute and bake on a lightly oiled pan at 425 F for 25-30 minutes to make sweet potato fries.
- Bake sliced sweet potatoes with apples and cinnamon for a hot dessert.

SWEET POTATO HASH

Makes 6 servings.1 cup per serving. Cook time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups frozen or fresh chopped bell peppers and onions
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes (about 2 medium potatoes), peeled and cut into small cubes
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Sauté bell peppers and onions until tender, about 5 minutes.
3. Add remaining ingredients and reduce heat to medium.
4. Cook for 20-25 minutes, stirring frequently. Sweet potatoes may begin to stick to the skillet, but continue to stir gently until they cook through.

5. Serve hot.

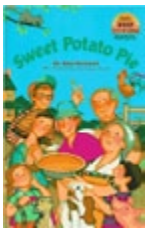
.Nutrition information per serving: Calories 244, Carbohydrate 38 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Protein 3 g, Total Fat 9 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 407 mg

Adapted From: https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Winter/SweetPotatoes/Sweet%20Potatoes%20-%20Family%20News_Eng_Final.pdf

READING FUN

My Oh My Sweet Potato Pie
by Beth Bloch

Sweet Potato Pete
by Art Ehrens



Sweet Potato Pie
by Anne Rockwell

Gigantic Sweet Potato by Dianne de Las Casas

SWEET POTATO FUN FACTS

- 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 not the same as yams, which are native to Africa and Asia and are starchier and drier than sweet potatoes.
- Sweet potatoes are members of the morning glory family and native to the American tropics.
- Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes in the New World when Columbus arrived in 1492.
- Sweet potatoes can be long and thin or fat and chunky. They are orange, white, or even purple.

ACTIVITY: SPROUTING SWEET POTATOES

Here are the supplies you need to get started sprouting sweet potatoes with kids.

- Clear container
- Water
- Toothpicks
- Knife
- Sweet potato
- Sunlight

Here's How it Works:

- You're not going to believe how easy to grow these sweet potato sprouts are.
- First, use your knife to chop the sweet potato in half.
- Next, fill the clear container with water. The clear container will allow kids to observe the growth of the roots. I used a plastic condiment jar, you can use whatever you feel most comfortable with or have on-hand.
- Then, insert 4 toothpicks into the middle of your sweet potato half. You will want to position your toothpicks so that 1-2 inches of the cut portion of the sweet potato is submerged in water when placed in your container. The toothpicks will hold your sweet potato upright in the container and allow water to circulate under the bottom.
- Be sure to check your water levels and add more water when necessary. As you can see here, my sweet potato needed some more water to cover the bottom!
- When the bottom, cut portion of the sweet potato is partially covered with water and the upper portion is exposed to air and sunlight, roots will begin to grow from the bottom and stems from the top.
- Place your sweet potato in a location (ideally a sunny window) where it can receive sunlight. I have sprouted sweet potatoes in areas that received limited, indirect sunlight before with success so don't worry too much about how much sunlight you need.
- Unlike other kitchen scraps such as lettuce, sweet potatoes do not sprout quickly.

- When your sweet potato plants start to sprout or grow roots, provide paper, clipboards, and pencils in your science center to encourage kids to record their observations about the changes they notice taking place. Ask them to tell you about the changes they see.
- If you want to take it one step further with this science project, invite your kids to help you plant the sprouts in the dirt outside!