

Sweet Potato

Despite often being called yams, sweet potatoes are a species distinct from that of both yams and potatoes. They can be found fresh, canned, or frozen year-round at any grocery store.

Sweet potatoes can spoil easily, so choose those with unblemished, wrinkle-free skin and store them in a cool, dark place, not the refrigerator or they will acquire an “off” flavor and unappealing texture.

In the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams. True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia - they have a pinkish white center and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds!

Sweet potatoes are vegetables that grow in the ground as tuberous roots (fleshy, side roots)

Varieties

There are two varieties of sweet potatoes:

- Pale yellow - with a dry, yellow flesh
- Dark orange - with a moist flesh. The dark orange is plumper in shape.

Both varieties may be very sweet to the taste!



Uses

Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked microwaved, mashed, or fried). Make them into stir-fries or krinkle-cut chips, or add to soups and casseroles. In the U.S., sweet potatoes are popular at Thanksgiving and Christmas meals!

HEALTH BENEFITS

Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of dietary carotenoids. One well-known carotenoid found in sweet potatoes, beta-carotene, is used by our bodies to make Vitamin A. This is one powerful antioxidant! It may help:

- decrease the risk of developing breast, esophageal, lung, pancreatic, and stomach cancers
- promote heart health
- improve blood sugar regulation
- enhance immune system function

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat-free!
- High in Vitamin A
- High in Vitamin C
- Good source of calcium and potassium
- Excellent source of fiber

