



Harvest of the Month



February is Sweet Potatoes

Nutrition and Health Benefits

- **Vitamin A** - keeps skin and bones healthy, resists and fights infection, and maintains good eyesight.
- **Vitamin C** - Helps wound heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.
- **Vitamin B6** - Important for the immune system and brain function and helps you get energy from your food.

Preparation & Cooking Tips

- Scrub the skin and cut away the damaged areas prior to cooking.
- Baked at 350 degrees for 40-50 minutes.
- For quick cooking stab the potato with a fork 6-8 times. Wrap the potato in a damp paper towel and microwave for 6 minutes flipping it over once.
- Can be cut into strips and eaten.

Kid-Friendly Eating Tips

Kids in the kitchen - Compare regular potatoes with sweet potatoes - consider how they grow, which part of the plant you eat and the taste and texture.

Facts

- Sweet Potatoes can be white, yellow, red, purple, or orange.
- Sweet potatoes are considered root vegetables because they are the part of the plant that grows into the earth and anchors the plant to the ground.

Did you know?

Sometimes people call sweet potatoes yams, but yams and sweet potatoes are different vegetables! Sweet potatoes are root vegetables that came from the tropical regions of Central and South America. Yams are large, starchy roots from Africa and Asia.

TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

The simpler the better! You can serve a sweet potato raw, cut into thin strips. You could also pair one slice of raw sweet potato and one slice of roasted sweet potato. Explain that the flavor changes depending on how you prepare the sweet potato. Tell kids not to give up if they try a vegetable and they do not like it. Instead, try it prepared another way because it may taste different and they might like it!

Credit: Liliana D Ramirez, FoodWise Nutrition Educator and Sheena Cook-Fuglsang, FoodWise Coordinator

READ



books

- *Little Sweet Potato* by Amy Beth Bloom
- *Sweet Potato Pie* by Kathleen Lindsey
- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- *Gigantic Sweet Potato* by Dianne De Las Casas



Harvest of the Month is a partnership between Jackson County Department of Health and Human Services, Fit Families, Black River Memorial Hospital, Together for Jackson County Kids, Ho-Chunk Nation, UW Extension-Jackson County, Lunda Community Center, Boys and Girls Club, Hansen's Market, local school districts, BRF Library and the community.

Sweet Potatoes are the Harvest of the Month!

Add sweet potatoes to your favorite family meals:

- Slice, toss with oil and seasonings, and bake to make sweet potato fries.
- Mash with butter and cinnamon for a sweet side dish.
- Bake whole and top with black beans & salsa or maple syrup & toasted pecans.

Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson kids will use for life.

FUN



activity: Grow Your Own Sweet Potato Vine

Objective: Kids will see how sweet potatoes grow.

Supplies: Sweet potato (unwashed with eyes), toothpicks, wooden skewers, or wooden craft sticks, clear quart-size jar or glass container with wide mouth, water (non-chlorinated), and sunlight.

Procedure: Stick 3-4 toothpicks around the middle of the potato and support them on the rim of a clear glass cup or jar with the plumper or rounded side facing up. Fill the glass jar with water so that the bottom of the potato is in water. Place the jar in moderate to full sunlight at room temperature. Change the water weekly and replenish what evaporates. The roots will develop on the tapered bottom end of the potato while the stem and leaf buds develop at the top. For the next three to six months, vines will grow from the sweet potato. Encourage kids to record their observations about the changes taking place. Ask them to identify the roots, stems, and leaves.

— Adapted from: *Got Veggies? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum*

Southern Stuffed Sweet Potato

Ingredients:

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|----------------------------------|--|
| 3 large sweet potatoes | 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed |
| 1 1/2 cups corn, fresh or frozen | Cilantro, to taste |
| 1 tsp chili powder | 1 oz. reduced fat cream cheese |
| 2 tsp cumin | 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt |
| 1/2 tsp oregano | 1-3 chipotles in adobo, finely minced |
| 1 Tbsp canola oil | 1/2 cup of cheddar cheese, shredded |
| 1/2 medium yellow onion, diced | |



Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350. Place the sweet potatoes on a baking sheet or large pan and bake for 50-60 minutes, until fork tender. Remove from the oven and set aside until cool enough to handle. Sauté the corn in a skillet over medium-high heat. Sprinkle with salt, cumin, chili powder and oregano. Cook about 7-10 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl; set aside. To the skillet, add the canola oil over medium heat. Add the onions and cook until tender. Remove to the bowl with the corn; add the black beans and as much cilantro as you wish to the bowl and mix to combine the ingredients. When the potatoes are cool enough, cut them in half, lengthwise. Carefully scoop out the flesh, leaving about a 1/8" border in the skins, and place into a large mixing bowl. Stir the cream cheese, sour cream, and chipotle pepper(s) into the bowl with the potatoes. Mash to desired texture. Gently stir in the corn and black bean mixture. Preheat the broiler. Fill each potato skin with the potato-corn mixture, and top each with about 1.5 Tbsp. of cheese. Broil for 2 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Yield: 6 servings (1 stuffed potato half)- 257 calories; 6.5 g fat; 298 mg sodium; 39.8 g carb; 8.2 g fiber; 11.3 g protein

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