



MAKE THE SWEET POTATO SWAP!

Sweet potatoes deliver a big nutrition punch with more vitamin A and fewer calories per ounce than white potatoes. They also provide B vitamins, calcium and magnesium, and the skin is a good source of fiber.



Swap white potatoes for sweet potatoes to give family favorites a nutrition and flavor boost:

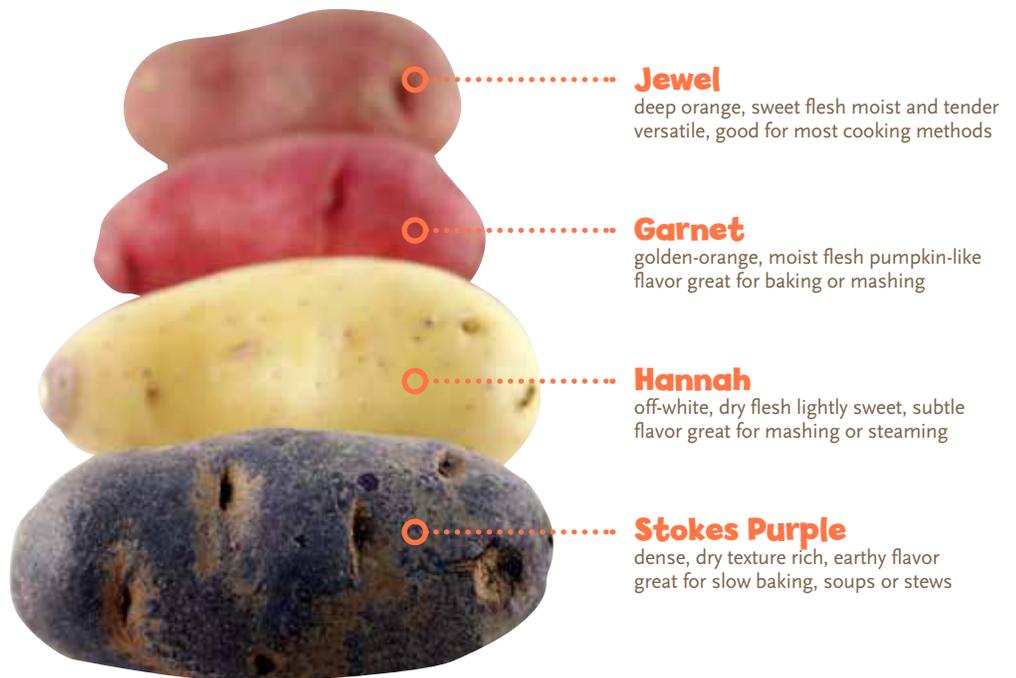
- Whip up mashed sweet potatoes. They don't even need any milk or flavoring added.
- Replace white potato chunks with sweet potato chunks in stews or soups.
- Boil sweet potatoes in broth and purée it to make a “creamy” fat-free soup.
- Make oven-baked sweet potato fries seasoned with your favorite spices.
- Use shredded sweet potatoes to make hash browns or to replace meat as a taco filling.
- Make sweet potato salad.
- Toss matchstick-cut sweet potatoes into stir-fries.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Sweet potatoes are so sweet and flavorful on their own, there's no need for added fat or sugar to tempt kids to eat them.
- Beyond cinnamon and nutmeg, try enhancing sweet potatoes with savory spices and herbs: cilantro, cumin or chili powder provide a great flavor contrast.
- Hide puréed sweet potatoes in muffins, breads and cakes to give those sweets a nutrition boost.
- Use a stainless steel knife to cut sweet potatoes; a carbon blade causes discoloration.

DISCOVER A SWEET POTATO RAINBOW

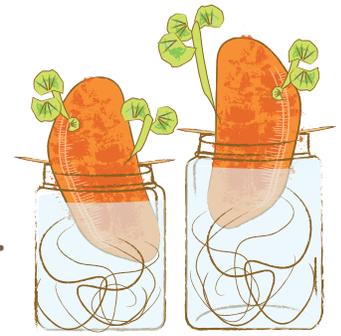
Ranging from centuries-old heirlooms to new hybrids, there are dozens of varieties cultivated in the United States—and not all are orange! They also grow in shades of white, yellow, pink and purple. Orange ones typically contain the most vitamin A; purple ones typically are higher in antioxidants. The flesh ranges in sweetness and texture, from dry to moist. Try different varieties to discover your favorites. Start with these easy-to-find types:



THE GREAT YAM MIX-UP

The names “sweet potato” and “yam” are often used interchangeably, but these two tubers are not in the same plant family at all. Yams are native to Africa and Asia, and are not commonly found in the U.S. So even when the label says yam, you're most likely buying a sweet potato.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY Sprout Something Sweet



Grow a sweet potato plant and watch how tubers produce roots and shoots.

What you'll need: sweet potato, toothpicks, water, glass container

Step 1: Stick five or six toothpicks into the sides of the sweet potato, around the center line so they stick out (like spokes on a wheel) perpendicular to the sweet potato.

Step 2: Find a mason jar or drinking glass with an opening wide enough to fit the potato, but small enough that the toothpicks rest on the rim so the potato doesn't fall in. Fill the jar with water and set the sweet potato on top of the jar. The bottom 1/4- 1/2 of the sweet potato should be immersed in water.

Step 3: Keep it in a sunny, warm area (near a warm window or an oven; some gardeners even place a heating pad around the jar). Add water as needed to maintain the water level. Within 10 days to 2 weeks the sweet potato should begin sprouting roots. Soon after that it should begin to produce stems called "slips" and eventually it will grow into a pretty green vine.

Step 4: Transplant the sweet potato or the slips into soil.

Outdoors (spring only): With some effort, it's possible to grow more sweet potatoes from the slips that sprout. As soon as the slips grow to a few inches long, carefully remove each one (pinch and twist with your fingers), and set them in a shallow bowl with the stems submerged in water (leaves hanging outside the water). When the slips begin to form roots, plant them in loose, well draining soil in the garden, and water them regularly.

Indoors: Once the sweet potato begins to sprout a pretty green vine, transfer it to a 5-inch diameter pot with potting soil, and keep it as a houseplant. Water it whenever the top inch of soil feels dry. As it grows, the vine may need support from a stake or trellis; if it becomes too long or weak, cut the vine back.

RECIPES

Let kids help with the simple steps in **bold!**

BREAKFAST

Sweet Potato Pancakes

1 sweet potato, baked, peeled and mashed (see Quick Baked Sweet Potato* recipe)

1 egg
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 cup milk (cow, soy or nut)

2 tablespoons applesauce
dash cinnamon (optional)
dash nutmeg (optional)
butter or cooking spray
honey or maple syrup (optional)

Step 1: Mix mashed sweet potato and egg together in a small bowl. Stir in the milk and applesauce. Add the dry ingredients and stir until combined. Do not overmix. Let the batter sit while you heat up a skillet or griddle on the stovetop. **Step 2:** Add a small amount of butter or oil to the hot skillet, then spoon the batter onto the skillet (about 1/3 cup per pancake). **Tip:** If the batter is too thick, add more milk a tablespoon at a time until it reaches desired consistency. **Step 3:** Cook each pancake until bubbles begin to appear, then flip and cook for a few more minutes on the other side. Serve with warm honey or maple syrup.

LUNCH OR DINNER

Quick Baked Sweet Potato

Kids love the sweet flavor of a plain baked sweet potato—and they can even prepare it themselves in the microwave in just a few minutes!

Step 1: Use a fork to poke a few holes in the exterior of each potato (this allows steam to escape when cooking). **Step 2:** Arrange the potatoes in a star formation (like spokes on a wheel) on a plate and place it in the microwave. **Step 3:** Cook on high for about 5 minutes for the first potato, plus 1 additional minute per additional potato (microwave cook times may vary). Check doneness by gently squeezing the potato; it should feel soft beneath the skin. **Step 4:** Use a butter knife to cut open the skin at the top of each potato and serve it with a spoon—the potato skin becomes the bowl! **Step 5 (optional):** Add flavor or texture with toppings, such as: nuts, coconut flakes, cinnamon, cumin, cayenne, salsa, fresh cilantro, mint or basil, orange or lemon juice, a dollop of Greek yogurt.

Sweet Potato Salad

2 large or 3 small sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 green apple, minced or grated
2 green onions, minced

1 tablespoon lemon juice (or more to taste)
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
salt and pepper (to taste)
fresh mint leaves, minced (optional)

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 350°F. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the potato cubes with the olive oil until coated, then bake for approx. 20 minutes or until tender. Set aside to cool. **Step 2:** In a large bowl, whisk together Dijon and lemon juice. **Step 3:** Add apple, onion and sweet potatoes to the bowl and stir until coated. **Step 4:** Add salt, pepper, mint and extra lemon juice to taste if desired.

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