

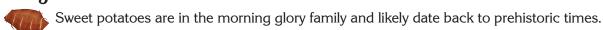
Harvest of the Month

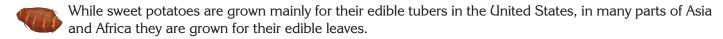
SWEET POTATOES

his root vegetable has a skin that may vary from dark yellow to dark red with an orange flesh which, as its name suggests, has a natural, sweet flavor. Although sometimes called yams, true yams are starchy edible roots that are white in color with a tough skin. Yams are native to Africa and are not commercially grown in the United States.

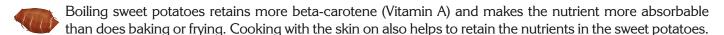


# Did you know?









### Selection

Look for firm sweet potatoes with smooth skin that is free from cracks, bruises, and signs of decay.

# **Storage**

To preserve texture and flavor, avoid storing sweet potatoes in the refrigerator. Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dark place away from heat sources for up to two to three weeks. Cooked sweet potatoes can be stored in an airtight container in the freezer. Add a small amount of lemon juice to preserve color.

# Handling

Wash before using. Cut off any brown spots. Use a stainless-steel knife to cut sweet potatoes as a carbon blade may cause the flesh to darken.

### Harvest Season

According to the PA Preferred Seasonal Calendar, sweet potatoes are in season in Pennsylvania from August through November.

## Nutrition

Sweet potatoes are a good source of Vitamin A, fiber, and potassium. Vitamin A is important in eye health and immune function. Potassium is a mineral that helps muscles contract and maintain normal blood pressure. Fiber is important in digestive function and can lower risk of diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.



# Cooking



**Bake/Roast:** Brush sweet potatoes with oil if you like and wrap in foil. Poke holes in the skin with a fork or knife. Bake at 400 degrees F or 40–50 minutes or until soft.



**Boil:** Cut peeled or unpeeled sweet potatoes into pieces. (If you plan to mash them after boiling, they should be peeled first.) Place in boiling water for 15–20 minutes and drain.



**Microwave:** Prick the skin of the sweet potato with a fork or knife a few times. Cook 1 potato for 3–4 minutes, 2 potatoes for 5–6 minutes, and 3 potatoes for 7–8 minutes on high. Turn the potato halfway through the cooking time.



**Oven Baked Sweet Potatoes** 

Makes about 4 servings

Recipe Source: Sweet Potatoes, Fresh. Household USDA Foods Fact Sheet. United States Department of Agriculture

### Ingredients

4 medium sweet potatoes Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

### Steps

- 1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Spray baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.
- 2. Cut potatoes into wedges or strips. Place in a bowl of cold water for 15 minutes.
- 3. Drain potatoes. Place in a large bowl and coat with vegetable oil. Season with black pepper and salt. Add paprika and cayenne pepper (if using). Place in a single layer on the baking sheet.
- 4. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from oven, turn the potatoes over with a spatula, and sprinkle with garlic. Bake an additional 15 minutes or until browned and crisp.





Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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