

Senior Bytes

HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM, SNAP EDUCATION



Sweet Potatoes

December 2015

Sweet potatoes are a true “American food.” Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes when Columbus reached the New World in 1492. Columbus was impressed with the sweet potato. When he returned home, his ship carried a load of this delicious treasure.

Today we usually enjoy sweet potatoes during the holiday season. But sweet potatoes are a healthy vegetable that we should enjoy all year long. They are a great source of vitamin A and fiber. In fact, one baked sweet potato has as much vitamin A as a carrot.

QUICK AND TASTY SWEET POTATOES

- Bake 1 sweet potato and 1 white potato in a 400°F oven until soft. Scoop potatoes out of shells. Mash together. Season to taste and stuff back into shells. Bake in oven for 20 more minutes.
- Top a baked sweet potato with 1/2 tsp. margarine, cinnamon and 1 tsp. maple syrup for a tasty treat.
- Toss together sweet potato slices and apple slices. Cover with small amount of apple juice and cinnamon sugar. Bake in 350°F oven until potatoes are soft.
- Mash sweet potatoes with crushed pineapple and juice. Place in casserole dish and bake in 350°F oven for 20 minutes.
- Ham and yam—top a baked sweet potato with chopped ham and shredded Swiss or cheddar cheese.



- Sweet potato fries—preheat oven to 450°F. Cut 1/2 large sweet potato into 1/2 inch strips or wedges and toss in 1/2 Tbsp oil and dash of salt. Arrange in single layer on a nonstick baking sheet. Bake in oven for 30 minutes, turning once.
- Roasting—spread white potato and sweet potato slices on a cookie sheet. Add diced onion, 1/2 to 1 Tbsp. oil, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Stir to coat. Roast potatoes in a 400°F oven until soft.

SWEET POTATO OR YAM?

Many of us use the words “sweet potatoes” and “yams” interchangeably when they are really two different vegetables. Sweet potatoes are elongated yellow or orange root vegetables coming to a point at each end and are typically found in our grocery stores.

The dark orange sweet potato is often confused for a yam. Yams have a brown or black skin resembling the bark of a tree. They are not often found in US stores and can grow to seven feet in length.



What are Craisins?



Craisins are dried cranberries. Fresh cranberries can be very tart; so unlike raisins, which are just dried grapes, craisins have sugar added to them when dried. While

craisins are a good source of fiber, they are high in sugar. Craisins make a colorful and flavorful addition to many of our menu items. Keep in mind their high sugar content and use sparingly.

- Add craisins to granola mixes.
- Add craisins to your breakfast cereal.
- Mix a few craisins into your favorite yogurt.
- Add craisins to trail mixes.
- Add craisins to muffins, quick breads or cookie batter.
- Toss craisins into your salad.
- Add craisins to your holiday stuffing.
- Add craisins to a peanut butter sandwich.

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