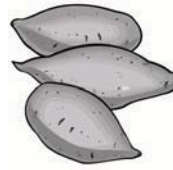


# Sweet Potatoes & Yams



**Fun Facts:** Sweet potatoes are often called yams, but the two are different plant species. True yams only grow in the tropics. Many Americans like sweet potatoes. They are among the top fifteen most-frequently eaten vegetables in the U.S.

**Selecting Fresh Sweet Potatoes:** Look for thick sweet potatoes that taper at the ends. Choose a firm sweet potato with smooth, uniformly colored skin. Sweet potatoes have a moist orange flesh that is somewhat brighter than the color of the skin. Avoid sweet potatoes with sunken, soft or decayed areas, and those with discolored, wrinkled, shriveled or broken skin.



## Measuring Fresh Sweet Potatoes

1 pound = about 3 medium (5" x 2" each) = 2 cups boiled = about 1 1/2 cups mashed  
1 medium cooked sweet potato, peeled = about 5 ounces by weight = about 150 grams

**Handling and Preserving:** Handle gently, since sweet potatoes bruise easily. Do not store in a plastic bag and do not refrigerate. Store unwashed sweet potatoes, stacked no more than three deep, in a dark pantry, potato bin or a covered ventilated basket on a countertop away from heat, and use within one or two weeks. Or keep in a cool (50-55° F.), humid, dark, dry, well-ventilated place for up to 4 months. **To freeze:** Wash and bake or boil whole, mature, cured sweet potatoes until almost tender. Cool. Do not peel. Wrap each in foil. Pack into freezer bags. Seal, label and freeze.

**Preparation and Serving:** Scrub sweet potatoes under cold running water. Cut out any bad spots. Use as directed in a main dish, side dish, baked product or dessert recipe! To serve, boil or steam halved or quartered sweet potatoes for 15-25 minutes or bake whole in a 400° F. oven for about 30 minutes, until fork-tender. Or pierce with a knife or fork to make steam holes and cook one in a microwave oven on high power for about 4 minutes, or until fork tender. Peel after cooking, if desired.

**Nutrition Facts** for 1 serving, or 1/2 cup baked sweet potato without the skin: Calories 103; Protein 2 grams; Carbohydrates 24 grams; Fat 0 grams. Sweet potatoes contribute fiber (even if you do not eat the skin), carotenoids (which the body converts to vitamin A), B vitamins, vitamin C, potassium and other essential nutrients to the diet.

**References:** [www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/veggies](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/veggies); [www.fda.gov/fdac/special/foodlabel/raw.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/special/foodlabel/raw.html); ESHA Food Processor; <http://agnews.tamu.edu/dailynews/stories/CROP/Nov1902a.htm>; <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/vegetables/sweetpotato.html>; Food for Fifty, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, 2001, by M. Molt, Prentice Hall

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**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, Manhattan, Kansas.**  
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