



Get to know: Sweet Potato



The sweet potato, or *Ipomoea batatas*, is a plant with large, starchy, sweet tasting roots that are eaten as a root vegetable. Despite the name, sweet potatoes are only distantly related to the potato and they do not belong to the same family. Sweet potatoes originated in either Central or South America, but have spread to every continent except Antarctica.

Nutrition

100g of sweet potato contains 86 calories, 20.1g of carbohydrates, 1.6g of protein, 4.2g of sugars, and 3g of dietary fibre. Sweet potatoes are higher in calories and sugars than most other vegetables. This means sweet potatoes are a good choice for a filling meal or for those trying to gain weight.

Fun Facts

Papau New Guinea produces far more sweet potatoes per capita than any other country. The annual crop in Papau New Guinea is approximately 500kg of sweet potatoes per capita. Compare this to the next highest per capita producer, the Soloman Islands, which produces a mere 160kg of sweet potatoes per person annually.

Sweet potato vine can be used to keep fish in a fish tank healthy. Take a cutting from a sweet potato vine and submerge the roots in the tank. The root system will grow rapidly, fuelled by nitrates and ammonia that it removes from the water. These nitrates and ammonia are toxic to fish but good for the sweet potato cutting. The fish will also enjoy hiding in the root system of the cutting.

Health Benefits

Sweet potatoes are a better source of Vitamin A than any other root vegetable. 100g of sweet potatoes contains 473% of the recommended daily amount of Vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for maintaining healthy skin, mucus membranes, and eyes. Sweet potatoes are also a good source of potassium (7%), Manganese (11%), and magnesium (6%).

source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweet_potato, http://www.nutrition-and-you.com/sweet_potato.html,
image: <http://paleoleap.com/eat-sweet-potatoes/>

What you can try with sweet potatoes:

Sweet Potato & Chicken Curry

by: BBC Good Food

Serves: 4

What You Need:

- 500g sweet potato, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 skinless chicken thigh fillets, each cut into large chunks
- 1 large red onion, cut into wedges
- 2 tbsp rogan josh curry paste
- 2 large tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 125g spinach

What to do:

1. Cook the sweet potatoes in boiling, salted water for 5-7 mins until just tender. Drain well, then set aside. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan, then add the chicken and onion. Cook for 5-6 mins until the chicken is browned and cooked through. Stir in the curry paste, cook for 1 min, add the tomatoes, and then cook for another minute.
2. Pour in 100ml boiling water and mix well. Simmer for 5 mins, add the spinach, and then cook for 2 mins until wilted. Fold in the potatoes and heat through. Serve with rice and naan breads.

<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/313610/sweet-potato-and-chicken-curry>

Try these other recipes

- Sweet potato casserole (traditional Thanksgiving dish in America): <http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/sweet-potato-casserole>
- How to make sweet potato fries: <http://www.jamieoliver.com/news-and-features/features/how-to-make-sweet-potato-fries/>
- Creamy carrot and sweet potato soup: <http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/creamy-carrot-sweet-potato-soup>