



Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes are usually the size of regular white potatoes. They are long and tapered. Sweet potatoes have smooth, thin skins which can be eaten.

Sweet potatoes are vegetables which grow in the ground as tuberous roots (fleshy, side roots).

Sweet potatoes originated in the tropical Americas at least 5,000 years ago. Christopher Columbus introduced sweet potatoes to Europe, and later explorers introduced them to Asia. China is now the world's largest grower of sweet potatoes.

In the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams. True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia — they have a pinkish white center and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds!

The sweet potato has only a very distant relationship with the potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they are often confused.

VARIETIES

There are two varieties of sweet potatoes

- Pale yellow — with a dry, yellow flesh
- Dark orange — with a moist flesh. The dark orange is plumper in shape and somewhat sweeter than the pale yellow variety.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of calcium and potassium
- Excellent source of fiber

USES

Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked microwaved, mashed or fried). Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Sweet potatoes are popular at Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

Some sweet potatoes are grown in Iowa.

