

Sweet Potatoes: Essentials You Need to Know About the Super-Nutritious, Super-Delicious Vegetable

by www.SixWise.com

Many of us in the United States think of sweet potatoes as a perfect complement to a [Thanksgiving table](#) (even though, ironically sweet potatoes were probably not on the dinner menu at the first Thanksgiving).

These naturally sweet, [bright orange root vegetables](#) have been enjoyed for about 10,000 years, and with good reason -- sweet potatoes are one of the healthiest vegetables (much healthier than a regular potato).

Five Healthy Reasons to Eat Sweet Potatoes

1. Sweet Potatoes are "Anti-Diabetic"

Animal studies suggest that sweet potatoes help to stabilize your blood sugar levels and lower insulin resistance.

2. They're a Concentrated Source of Carotenoids

Carotenoids may be responsible for the anti-diabetic properties above, plus they:

- May help to prevent cancer
- Play a role in anti-aging
- Enhance the function of your immune system
- Promote proper cell communication, which may help prevent cancer
- Help support your reproductive system

3. They're Loaded With Antioxidants.

[Antioxidants](#), according to the American Dietetic Association, may decrease your risk of infection, heart disease and cancer while boosting the function of your immune system. And sweet potatoes contain root storage proteins that have unique, and significant, antioxidant properties, along with the well-known antioxidants vitamin C and beta-carotene.

4. Sweet Potatoes are Anti-Inflammatory



Sweet potatoes have an irresistibly sweet flavor that even people with diabetes can safely enjoy (see #1 below).

An Irresistible Holiday Gift for Veggie Lovers

The beta-carotene and vitamin C in sweet potatoes are also anti-inflammatory, which means that they may help to treat asthma, [rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis](#).

5. They're All-Around Nutritious

Sweet potatoes contain an impressive array of nutrients such as vitamin A, vitamin C, manganese, copper, fiber, vitamin B6, potassium and iron.

Sweet Potatoes Vs. Yams

In the United States, yams are typically sweet potatoes that have been mislabeled. In fact, sweet potatoes only began being called "yams" in the mid 20th century when the orange-colored variety was introduced (prior to that most sweet potatoes were white).

In reality, a yam is a tuber native to Africa, and is in no way related to the sweet potato.

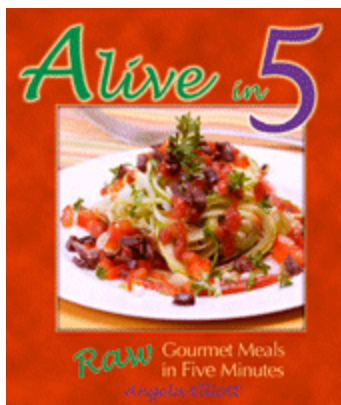
A Unique Sweet Potato Recipe for Thanksgiving ... or Anytime

This one is sure to be a hit with all of your friends and family ...

Sweet Potato Soup with Buttered Pecans

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 cup finely chopped leek, washed well and drained
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 3 large carrots, sliced thin (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 pounds (about 3 large) sweet potatoes
- a 1/2-pound russet (baking) potato
- 5 cups chicken broth plus additional for thinning the soup if desired



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Sweet potatoes -- baked, mashed, or in casseroles

- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 1/2 cups water

For the buttered pecans:

- 3/4 cup chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Crème fraîche or sour cream as an accompaniment

-- are commonly served at Thanksgiving dinners. For something unique, try out the recipe below for Sweet Potato Soup with Buttered Pecans.

Method:

1. In a kettle cook the onion, the leek, the garlic, and the carrots with the bay leaf and salt and pepper to taste in the butter over moderate heat, stirring, until the vegetables are softened.
2. Add the sweet potatoes, peeled, halved lengthwise, and sliced thin, the russet potato, peeled, halved lengthwise, and sliced thin, the 5 cups broth, the wine, and the water, simmer the mixture, covered for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are very tender, and discard the bay leaf.
3. In a blender puree the mixture in batches until it is very smooth, transferring it as it is pureed to a large saucepan, add the additional broth to thin the soup to the desired consistency, and season the soup with salt and pepper.
4. The soup may be made 1 day in advance, kept covered and chilled, and reheated.

Make the buttered pecans:

1. In a skillet cook the pecans in the butter with salt to taste over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes, or until they are golden brown, and transfer them to paper towels to drain.
2. The pecans may be made 2 days in advance and kept in an airtight container or a resealable plastic bag.
3. Divide the soup among bowls and top each serving with a dollop of the crème fraîche and some of the buttered pecans.

Recommended Reading

[Your Play-by-Play on the Nutritional Values \(or Lack Thereof\) of Every Item on a Typical Thanksgiving Table](#)

[The 11 Healthiest Autumn Fruits and Vegetables](#)

Sources

[The World's Healthiest Foods](#)

[Epicurious.com](#)

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