

LEARN



Jewel

facts

- Spanish translation: *El camote* • Hmong translation: *Qos Liab*
- Sweet potatoes originated in the tropical regions of Central and South America.
- Sometimes people call sweet potatoes yams, but yams and sweet potatoes are different vegetables! Yams are large, starchy roots native to Africa and Asia.
- Sweet potatoes can be white, yellow, red, purple, or orange.
- Sweet potatoes are considered root vegetables because they are the part of the plant that grows into the earth and anchors the plant to the ground.



Hannah



Garnet

EAT



nutrition & seasonality

• Key nutrients:

Vitamin A - Keeps skin and bones healthy, resists and fights infection, and maintains good eyesight.

Vitamin C - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.

Vitamin B6 - Important for immune system and brain function and helps you get energy from your food.

- Fresh sweet potatoes grown in Wisconsin are available from July through October.

TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

The simpler the better! You can serve a sweet potato raw, cut into thin strips. You could also pair one slice of raw sweet potato and one slice of roasted sweet potato. Explain that the flavor changes depending on how you prepare the sweet potato. Tell kids not to give up if they try a vegetable and they do not like it. Instead, try it prepared another way because it may taste different and they might like it!

Credit: Liliana D Ramirez, FoodWise Nutrition Educator and Sheena Cook-Fuglsang, FoodWise Coordinator

With **POWER UP**
SWEET POTATO



FUN

activity: Grow Your Own Sweet Potato Vine



Objective: Kids will see how sweet potatoes grow.

Supplies: Sweet potato (unwashed with eyes), toothpicks, wooden skewers, or wooden craft sticks, clear quart-size jar or glass container with wide mouth, water (non-chlorinated), and sunlight.

Procedure: Stick 3-4 toothpicks around the middle of the potato and support them on the rim of a clear glass cup or jar with the plumper or rounded side facing up. Fill the glass jar with water so that the bottom of the potato is in water. Place the jar in moderate to full sunlight at room temperature. Change the water weekly and replenish what evaporates. The roots will develop on the tapered bottom end of the potato while the stem and leaf buds develop at the top. For the next three to six months, vines will grow from the sweet potato. Encourage kids to record their observations about the changes taking place. Ask them to identify the roots, stems, and leaves.

— Adapted from: *Got Veggies? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum*

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: This activity is simple to do in a home environment if kids have access to a sweet potato. If this is not feasible, share a link to a video: <https://youtu.be/hXSSXP2Pt0>.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ

books

- *Little Sweet Potato* by Amy Beth Bloom
- *Sweet Potato Pie* by Kathleen Lindsey
- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- *Gigantic Sweet Potato* by Dianne De Las Casas



planting

Sweet potatoes are started from plants called “slips” that grow from the eyes on the sweet potato. Transplant slips in the garden as soon as the soil warms and all danger of frost has passed. Sweet potatoes grow on trailing vines that quickly cover the soil, rooting at the nodes along the way.

harvesting

Dig the main crop of sweet potatoes around the time of the first frost in the fall. Sweet potato tubers will keep getting larger as long as the weather is warm enough. Cut back the top growth and carefully dig out the sweet potatoes to avoid bruising or damaging them.