

Extension

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The Sweet News on Sweet Potatoes Great taste, easy to cook and super nutritious!

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Sweet potatoes can be a healthy part of any meal, served as a main dish, snack, side dish or dessert ingredient. Enjoy them baked, smashed, boiled, steamed, roasted or grilled. You can also use sweet potatoes as an ingredient in soups, casseroles, baked goods such as breads and muffins or in a sweet potato pie.

Sweet potatoes are naturally:

- Low in calories (one medium baked sweet potato = 103 calories)
- High in Vitamins A & C
- Cholesterol free
- Low in sodium
- Good source of potassium
- Fat free
- Good source of fiber



Buying and Storing:

When buying sweet potatoes, you want the skin to be a bright orange uniform color and firm to the touch. Sweet potatoes with pale colored skin and flesh tend to be dry and less flavorful.

Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry place. Do not put them in the refrigerator. Chilling sweet potatoes will make the center of the potato hard and change the taste. For best flavor cook sweet potatoes before freezing.

Baking:

Scrub sweet potatoes and dry them well. Rub lightly with vegetable oil. Place on a foil lined baking sheet to catch any juices. Bake in a preheated 400 F degree oven for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 375 F, and bake until soft.

Serve with toppings of your choice such as:

- Savory: butter, olive oil, low fat sour cream, cheese, crushed dried thyme or red pepper flakes
- Sweet: diced apples, chopped orange pieces, crushed pineapple, cinnamon, pumpkin pie spice, a little brown sugar, honey or maple syrup. If sweet potatoes are too dry, stir in a little fruit juice before adding a topping.

Boiling or steaming:

Scrub well and boil or steam whole or cut in half with peels on to retain more nutrients. When fork tender, drain, cool and peel, then cube or mash as needed.

Grilling:

Slice ½ inch thick, toss with oil. Grill until lightly browned. Sprinkle with salt, no-salt seasoning, spices or drizzle with lime juice.

Oven Baked Sweet Potato Fries:

Cut washed (peeled or unpeeled) sweet potatoes into thin (¼-1/2 inch) wedges or strips. Soak sweet potatoes in a bowl of cold water for 15 minutes. Drain potatoes and pat dry with a paper towel. Toss potatoes with olive oil or vegetable oil and salt or favorite fry seasoning mixture. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Bake in a single layer at 375 F degrees for 20-30 minutes (depending on thickness of pieces) or until fries are tender on the inside and browned on the outside.

Let's Talk

Most adults want their children to eat healthy foods, but many children like the taste of high fat, high sugar and familiar foods like French fries made with white potatoes. So, getting your children to try sweet potatoes might mean you need to serve them several ways until they find a dish they like. If you have a picky eater, ask them to help you make the food. If they help, they are more likely to at least try a new dish. To increase acceptance of a new food, serve it alongside familiar foods and when your child is hungry. Complement children for trying something new. Be a good role model and try new foods yourself. When eating out choose sweet potato fries over regular fries. Because there are so many ways to cook and serve sweet potatoes you are likely to find more than one way your children will enjoy eating them

Recipe for Health:

Around the Block Sweet Potato and Black Bean Enchiladas

Ingredients:

2 cup sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ cup low fat milk, chicken broth or vegetable broth
1 (15 oz.) can black beans drained
1 (10-15 oz.) can green chili sauce (use your favorite brand)
¾ cup low fat sour cream
8 medium (8 inch) whole wheat, or 10 corn tortillas
¾ cup grated cheese

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 F degrees. Mash cooked sweet potatoes with garlic powder and either milk or broth until smooth, a few chunks are ok. In another bowl combine the green chili sauce and sour cream. Pour ½ of the green chili and sour cream mixture in to the bottom of a 9/X11 inch baking dish. Spoon the sweet potato mixture and black beans evenly in the center of tortillas. Roll up each tortilla. Place enchiladas seam side down in baking dish. Pour remaining green chili and sour cream mixture on top of enchiladas. Cover with foil. Bake 15- 20 minutes. Uncover dish, sprinkle with cheese and bake uncovered 15 additional minutes or until cheese is melted. Children can help with all of the steps of making of this recipe except putting it in, or pulling it out of the oven. Serve with salsa and a crunchy salad.

While enchiladas are baking, gather your children and take a walk around a block or two. Come back in about 15 minutes to sprinkle on the cheese. Head back outside to repeat your walk, but do it in the opposite direction. When you return the dinner is ready.

