



Wellness Matters

A fresh look at health, nutrition and food safety brought to you by Nancy Gal, UF/IFAS Extension Agent IV



To sign up for this newsletter [click here.](#)

JANUARY 2015 VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2



Timely Tips

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Timely Tips</i>	
Sweet Potato ~ Not Just for Thanksgiving	1
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	1-2
<i>News You Can Use</i>	
UF/IFAS Nutrition Research in Marion County ~ TIME TO SIGN-UP ~	2
<i>Produce Picks ~ Sweet Potato</i>	3
<i>Cuisine Corner</i>	
The Almost Naked Sweet Potato ~ With A Touch Of Italy	3
<i>A Closer Look ... Diabetes & Sweet Potato</i>	4
<i>What Is It? A Sweet Potato or a Yam</i>	5
<i>Research Brief ... New Protein Study</i>	5

Did You Know?
Sweet potato leaves are edible?
See page 4 for more info...

UPCOMING EVENTS

Diabetes Support Group
Mt. Moriah Baptist Church
April 30, May 21, June 25, July 9,
August 13, Sept. 17, Oct. 22,
Nov. 12 and Dec. 10.
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

For information, call May Stafford,
R.N. at 352-629-3782

Sweet Potato ~ Not Just for Thanksgiving: *Skip the Marshmallows and Appreciate their Natural Flavor*

I can't think of a more neglected vegetable than the sweet potato. Sure, it is wildly popular during the fall holidays, but the rest of the year it falls out of "flavor." Sometimes I wonder if it is on holiday menus as a "dessert" rather than a vegetable. While most vegetables are nutrient-dense ~ rich in nutrients such as vitamins and minerals ~ "naked sweet potatoes" without added sugar, fat and sodium are super-nutritious and a calorie bargain. Yes, you read correctly, a calorie bargain. A naked (plain) baked medium sweet potato provides 103 calories, is fat-free and practically sodium-free at 41 milligrams per serving. Sweet potato is rich in fiber, potassium and vitamin A, much higher than many vegetables. Also, it is a good source of vitamin C, manganese and antioxidants.



Whether you are a food connoisseur or a "heat and eat" kind of chef, sweet potato will quickly become one of your food friends. What better way to boost your nutrition in a tasty way than with the complement of sweet potato to your diet. Sweet potato can be prepared in a variety of ways, from tender-crisp to a very smooth consistency, depending on your preference or recipe. As one of babies first vegetables, sweet potato purée is always a favorite choice and a great way to introduce babies and toddlers to healthful foods. Cut and cooked in different sizes and shapes, they go well in savory salads, side dishes and main entrées. Served hot or cold, their flavor is pleasantly sweet and is an ideal food for individuals with chewing and swallowing problems that require texture-modified food. Having second thoughts about sweet potato? Well, very good. Now that I have convinced you sweet potato is nutritious, delicious and super easy to prepare ~ your next step is to get a few and start enjoying!

[North Carolina Sweet Potatoes: Naturally Healthy](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

ServSafe® Food Manager's Training and Exam

UF/IFAS Extension Marion County
2232 NE Jacksonville Rd.
Ocala, FL 34470

May 28, Aug. 4, Nov. 5.
8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Pre-registration required.
Call 888-232-8723

Cost: \$ 110 for class & exam
\$ 165 for class, book & exam

~ STROKE PREVENTION ~ LIFESTYLE BEHAVIORS THAT CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK OF HAVING A STROKE

April 28 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Collins Resource Center*

May 22 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Auxiliary Center*

Munroe Regional Medical Center
Prestige 55 Program *
Please call 352-671-2153 for
more information and to register.

Critical Nutrients As We Age

May 13 ~ 10:00 a.m. - noon

On Top Of the World
Master the Possibilities
8415 SW 80th St., Ocala, FL 34481
Time: 10 a.m. to NOON

For more information and to
register, call 352-854-3699 or
www.MasterthePossibilities.com.

Contributing Author

Amanda Ford, PhD Student
Food Science & Human Nutrition
University of Florida/IFAS

News You Can Use

Interested in Participating in UF/IFAS Nutrition Research? *Look What's Happening in Marion County ...*

Human Nutrition Study: Participants Needed

- Have you ever wondered about the nutrient composition of your diet?
- We are looking for individuals diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) to participate in a study investigating dietary habits, food intake and nutritional status.
- You may be compensated for your participation.



If interested, please call and/or email

Study Phone: 352-263-9136

Email: fnutrition@ifas.ufl.edu



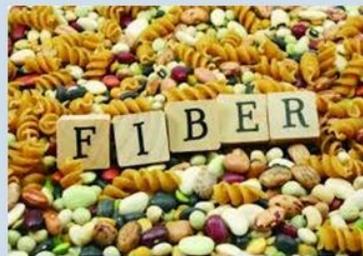
Food Science and Human Nutrition Department
University of Florida

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2015-U-0945
For Use Until February 2, 2016

Nutrition Research

University of Florida

Nutrition Education Study Volunteers Needed



- You will receive dietary education involving ways to increase your fiber consumption to the recommended daily amount
- Purpose: determine the effectiveness of a community education program on fiber intake, uremic symptoms and quality of life in individuals with chronic kidney disease
- Study length: 10 weeks
- Compensation will be provided

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2013-U-0820
For Use Until 09/9/2015



Please call 352-263-9136

**Nutritional Value
Sweet Potato
baked in skin,
(2 " wide by 5" long)**

calories	103
protein	2 g
fat	0 g
carb	24 g
fiber	4 g
potassium	542 mg
sodium	41 mg
vitamin A, RAE	1096 mcg
vitamin C	22 mg

Key:
g grams
mg milligrams
mcg micrograms
IU International Units
RAE Retinol Activity
Equivalents

Produce Picks

There are three main varieties of sweet potato grown in Florida. They are planted in warm weather from spring through the end of June and are ready for harvest in the fall, usually starting in October. Home and locally grown sweet potatoes from farmer's markets are preferred for their freshness, low-cost and contribution to the local economy. If you miss your local harvest, sweet potatoes are grown in several other states, depending on climate and growing conditions, and are available year-round in most produce departments. There are hundreds of types of sweet potato varieties that look very different than the main varieties grown in Florida. While the skin color might appear similar, their flesh can be yellow, orange, or even purple.

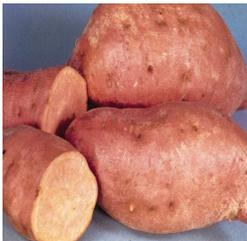


Choose small to medium size sweet potatoes that are smooth, and firm with no signs of decay such as soft spots, blemishes or cuts. Select sweet potatoes that are uniform in shape for even cooking. Store in a cool, dry place. Never store in the refrigerator. Temperatures below 50°F can affect their flavor and cause decay.

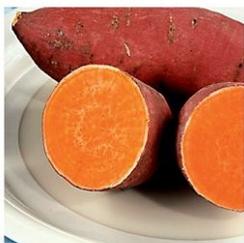
[USDA Nutrient Database](#)

Cuising Corner

~ Florida Grown ~
Main Sweet Potato Varieties
Centennial



Beauregard



Vardaman



Savory Roasted Sweet Potatoes, Red Peppers and Onions
(Almost naked with a touch of Italy!)



Ingredients:

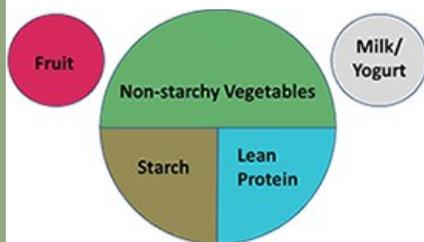
- 3 medium unpeeled sweet potatoes (cut into ½ inch cubes)
- 2 medium red peppers, seeded and diced
- 1 medium red onion (peeled, quartered and separated into pieces)
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon each, garlic powder and oregano

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Lightly spray bottom of shallow roasting pan with cooking spray.
2. Scrub unpeeled sweet potatoes under cool running tap water using a vegetable brush. Make sure to remove all visible surface residue and cut away decayed areas.
3. Cut sweet potatoes into ½ inch cubes.
4. In a large bowl gently toss all ingredients together until mixed well.
5. Spread single layer in the pan and roast for approximately 25 to 35 minutes until the vegetables are cooked through and browned. Stir frequently to prevent sticking to the pan.

Makes 4 servings

Per serving : 137 calories, 3 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat, 34 milligrams sodium, 572 mg potassium, 5 g fiber, 916 mcg vitamin A, and 95 mg vitamin C

The [Idaho Plate Method](#) is an easy to use diabetes meal planning strategy to help keep postprandial (after eating) blood glucose levels in a healthful range. Check out the meal diagram below to see how to include nutrient dense carbohydrates, such as sweet potato, in your meals.



Did You Know?

Sweet Potato

Leaves and Shoots Are Edible

Who would think that sweet potato could get any healthier, but the plants young leaves and shoots are similar in nutritional value to spinach. These mildly flavored leafy greens are available for eating through the Florida summer. They are comparable in nutritional value to spinach and provide vitamin B, beta-carotene, iron, calcium, zinc and protein.



[UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions: Sweet Potatoes](#)

[Nutritional and Medicinal Quality of Sweet Potato Tops and Leaves University of Arkansas Extension](#)

Good News!

If You Haven't Heard, People with Diabetes CAN EAT Sweet Potato as Part of a Healthy Meal Plan.

Many people with diabetes believe they can't eat sweet potato. I hear it all the time from participants in the UF/IFAS Extension's *Take Charge of Your Diabetes* self-management education program. Well, after 30 years living with type 1 diabetes and teaching the program, I know first-hand that people with diabetes can enjoy this healthy food. Sweet potato can be included as part of the total meal carbohydrate without concerns about blood glucose levels spiking when a small amount is eaten. A reasonable serving is one half-cup of mashed sweet potato or a *small* baked sweet potato. Each of these contains about 15 grams of carbohydrate, which is counted as one carbohydrate choice.

Carbohydrate counting has been well established as a reliable meal planning strategy to help people with diabetes manage postprandial (after eating) blood glucose levels. [The American Diabetes Association's Choose Your Foods: Food Lists for Diabetes](#) divides foods into groups based on carbohydrate. The carbohydrate food list includes:

Starch (breads, cereals, and grains; starchy vegetables; crackers and snacks; and beans, peas and lentils)

Fruits

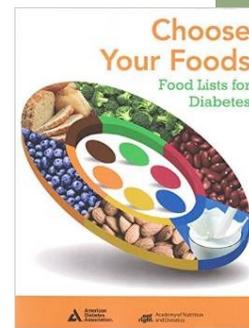
Milk and milk substitutes (yogurt, buttermilk, soy milk, etc.)

Sweets, desserts and other carbohydrates

Non-starchy vegetables

Sweet potato is considered a starchy vegetable along with corn, sweet peas, white potato, and winter squash. Not only is sweet potato very nutritious, it has the added benefit of having a low [glycemic index](#) (GI). The GI categorizes carbohydrate-containing foods based on how much they increase blood glucose. The lower the GI, the less effect the food has on blood glucose.

It is recommended that people with diabetes include a certain amount of carbohydrate per meal and snack. The amount is based on their daily calorie requirement, activity level, medications and average blood glucose control. Ideally, people with diabetes should consult with a registered dietitian (RD), preferably one who is also a certified diabetes educator (CDE), to develop an individualized meal plan. Their meal plan will include an appropriate amount of carbohydrate distributed throughout the day to achieve postprandial blood glucose levels as recommended by their healthcare provider.



While people refer to sweet potatoes and yams interchangeably, they are not related botanically. For that matter, the white potato is not related to the sweet potato either. Sweet potatoes belong to the morning glory family, yams are related to grasses and lilies and white potatoes belong to the Solanaceae family. Yams are native to Africa and Asia, and grow from the size of a small potato to over 100 pounds. Starchier and drier than sweet potatoes, they are usually found in international markets or sometimes available in the special produce section of local supermarkets. Sweet potato varieties grown in the U.S. are classified as firm or soft. Firm types were the first to be produced. As a way to distinguish the two types, early producers called the soft type a “yam” because they were similar in texture. To set the record straight, USDA requires sweet potatoes labeled “yam” to also include the term “sweet potato” to distinguish them from the true yam.

[Agriculture Marketing Resource Center](#)

[Everyday Mysteries - Library of Congress: Science Reference Services](#)

Research Briefs

UF/IFAS Extension Marion County

In 2014, a research team led by Dr. Wendy Dahl from the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department at UF in collaboration with Nancy Gal and Julie Forehand (Nutrition Services Coordinator, Marion Senior Services) carried out a study determining if handgrip strength is useful for screening nutritional risk of older adults. As malnutrition is a common concern among older adults and leads to muscle loss and weakness, the quick and easy handgrip test (device is called a digital dynamometer) might be useful in identifying those at risk. The results of this study will be presented at the 2015 Gerontology Society of America (GSA) 68th Annual Scientific Meeting in Orlando in November.



Two studies are planned for 2015. One will be looking at the feasibility and effects of increasing fiber intakes in people with chronic kidney disease. The second study will look at the effects of high protein diets on gastrointestinal health and wellness in older adults. Next time you visit a grocery store, see if you can find some of the food products that have been recently introduced and are being advertised to shoppers as high protein. These products are largely advertised for their potential effects on improving nutritional status and decreasing muscle loss. Research in Marion County will explore the health effects of higher protein intake at a time when many believe that the dietary recommendation for protein, especially in older adults, should be increased.

Image: Kelly Springstroh, dietetics undergraduate student demonstrates use of the digital dynamometer on Dr. Susan Percival, Chair and Professor, UF Food Science and Human Nutrition Department

Meet the Agent

Nancy Gal, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent IV, has been on the faculty of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension in Marion County since 1987. She teaches health, nutrition and food safety to adults and youth ~ promoting wellness and disease prevention. Her areas of specialty include type 2 diabetes, pre-diabetes, cardiovascular disease, weight management, and food safety. Nancy is well known for her diabetes education programs and has served on the Florida Diabetes Advisory Council and Florida Alliance for Diabetes Prevention and Care. Her professional accomplishments include international, national and state recognition for her work with Dr. Linda Bobroff, UF/IFAS Extension Nutrition Specialist, on the development of the UF/IFAS Extension's [Take Charge of Your Diabetes](#) program.

What is Extension?

Extension is a partnership between state, federal and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and expertise to the public. The University of Florida, together with Florida A&M University, administers the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.

University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) is a federal, state, and county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences, and to making that knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life.

At the University of Florida, Extension is located in the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and is called UF/IFAS Extension. The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CAL S) and the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station are also located at Extension.



[UF/IFAS Extension Marion County](#)

2232 NE Jacksonville Road

Ocala, Florida 34470

352-671-8400