

Foods For Thought

From the Vegetable Garden Team of Eden Mill Nature Center

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Featuring:

PURPLE SWEET POTATOES



Presented by
Harford County

Master
Gardeners
and
Family &
Consumer
Sciences
Educator

Roasted Purple Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

2 large purple sweet potatoes
2 tablespoons melted butter
½ t. dried rosemary
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste



Directions

Preheat oven to high broil. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Trim ends of sweet potatoes then cut into ¾ inch slices. Lower potato slices into boiling water and boil for 15- 20 minutes until potatoes are tender.

Remove to a paper towel and drain. Stir the melted butter, rosemary and garlic together in a bowl. Place the potato slices onto a large baking sheet. Press down on each slice using the back of a fork until slightly smashed. Spoon the butter mixture over each potato slice. Broil for 5-10 minutes until edges and tops of potatoes are crispy. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 6.
Nutrition info/serving: Calories 93; Carbs 13g; Protein 1g; Fat 4g; Sodium 71 mg; Fiber 2g

Mashed Purple Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

1 lb purple sweet potatoes
¼ cup unsalted butter
¼ to ½ cup milk
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper



Directions

Rinse, peel, and cut the sweet potatoes into small pieces. Place them in a large pot and cover with cold, salted water. Bring to a boil and cook for about

15 minutes or until fork tender. Drain the potatoes and return to the pan. Add butter, salt, and pepper. Use a potato masher or mixer on low speed to mix potatoes until they are mashed. Add milk starting with ¼ cup and increasing as needed.

*Nutrition Info per serving (serves 4):
Calories 209; Carbs 24g; Protein 2g;
Fat 12g; Sodium 651mg; Fiber 3g*

Sweet Potato Fries

Ingredients

1 ¼ lbs purple sweet potatoes, washed and sliced into fries
3 tablespoons oil
2 tablespoons minced fresh herbs (rosemary and oregano)
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon black pepper



Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Place cut purple sweet potatoes on a large baking sheet. In a small bowl, stir together the oil,

minced herbs, salt, garlic powder, and pepper until combined. Pour the mixture over the fries on the baking sheet and toss until all the fries are well coated. Arrange fries in a single layer. Bake for 15 minutes, flip each fry using a spatula then return to the oven and bake for an additional 10 minutes until fries are crispy and start to turn golden brown on the edges. Remove from oven and serve.
*Nutrition info per serving (1/4 cup):
Calories 312; Carbs 42g; Protein 4g;
Fat 15g; Sodium 573mg; Fiber 6g*

Recipes courtesy of Harford County Master Gardeners. Images from allrecipes.com and MGS.



Who said this?

We are being playful with this section for the purple sweet potato issue. We could find no references to this vegetable in any of our research. So we looked for quotes on the color purple, and have added "sweet potato" to each of the quotations below.

Purple is my favorite color. It makes me think of spring and summer. A purple (*sweet potato*) dress, eating grapes, lilacs - I love purple. - *Angela Yee, American radio personality*

Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple (*sweet potatoes*). - *Regina Brett, American author/ inspirational speaker*

The key to success is to find a way to stand out-to be the purple (*sweet potato*) cow in a field of monochrome Holsteins. - *Seth Godin, American author/ entrepreneur*

I spent every day of third grade wearing a glittery purple (*sweet potato*) cowboy hat. - *Simone Giertz, Swedish inventor*

Seek to be the purple (*sweet potato*) thread in the long white gown. - *Epictetus, Greek philosopher*

Believe It or Not!

- In most kitchens, the refrigerator is where food goes to live another day. However, not all foods, including purple sweet potatoes, are well-suited for the fridge. Store them in a cool, dry, dark area instead.
- The Stokes purple sweet potato is named after Stokes County, North Carolina, where it was developed by Mike Sizemore. Sizemore propagated purple sweet potatoes that were gifted to him after his regular sweet potatoes won a ribbon at the state fair. The sweetness of the Stokes variety of purple sweet potatoes is infused with floral notes, and some even compare the taste to wine.
- Japanese workers introduced the purple spuds to Hawaii in the early 20th century. Today, Okinawan purple sweet potatoes are common ingredients in many Hawaiian dishes, like mashed Okinawan sweet potatoes, where they are boiled and mashed with coconut milk, sugar, and salt.
- There is such a dessert as Purple Sweet Potato Pie! It is made with coconut milk for a delicate sweetness.
- A purple sweet potato can be eaten raw or undercooked without causing any stomach problems, not so with a white potato.



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What are purple sweet potatoes?

Purple sweet potatoes are a type of root vegetable that has a vibrant purple color and a sweet flavor. They are also known as Okinawan sweet potatoes or Hawaiian sweet potatoes, and they belong to the same plant family as morning glory flowers. Purple sweet potatoes are not only delicious but also nutritious. Purple sweet potatoes have a rich, wine-like flavor with a creamy texture. They are sweeter and moister than yams.

The purple color is due to anthocyanin, a type of flavonoid that gives these potatoes their vibrant color. They have a slightly sweet flavor and creamy texture, and can be used interchangeably with standard sweet potatoes, although they may need additional cooking time. The purple sweet potato has a thin smooth skin and the flesh is usually a deep purple.

Purple sweet potatoes are easy to grow in your own garden. Choose healthy slips (young shoots) from a nursery or online source. You can also grow your own slips from organic purple sweet potatoes by placing them in water until they sprout roots and leaves. At Eden Mill we grew our own slips this year. And after an early skirmish with a bunny, the potato vines flourished.

Health Benefits

A Blue Zone region is a geographical area where people live longer than the global average. Among many aspects of the lifestyle of the Blue Zones is diet, and the purple sweet potato is a recommended food. Purple sweet potatoes are mainly composed of carbohydrates, which provide energy for the body. The potato is also a good source of Vitamin A and Vitamin C.

Eating this colorful vegetable may lower blood pressure, and may also have benefits for the liver. After learning about the benefits of the Blue Zone diet, the garden team decided to grow purple sweet potatoes as one of our experimental crops for the season. We thought who doesn't want to live a longer, healthier life? These tubers have a vibrant color that comes from anthocyanin, a type of antioxidant that can help fight inflammation, protect your heart, boost your immune system, and lower your risk of chronic diseases. This was definitely the 2024 crop for us. You can enjoy purple sweet potatoes in various ways, such as baking, boiling, microwaving, or air-frying them. Try adding some purple sweet potatoes to your diet today.



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