

Sweet Potatoes vs. Yams: What's the Difference?

Many people use the terms “sweet potato” and “yam” interchangeably, but they are actually different vegetables. In the U.S., what is labeled as a “yam” is almost always a sweet potato. The USDA requires that “yam” always be accompanied by “sweet potato” on labels for clarity.

Key Differences Between Sweet Potatoes and Yams

Sweet Potatoes (Grown in the U.S.)

Part of the Morning Glory plant family with smooth skin and a firm texture.

- **Two varieties:**
 - Pale sweet potatoes – Thin yellow skin, light flesh, dry texture (like a baking potato)
 - Dark sweet potatoes – Thicker orange skin, sweet moist flesh, rich in beta-carotene

Yams (Grown in Central & South America, Africa, Asia)

A tuber (bulb) from a tropical vine with scaly, rough skin and dry, starchy flesh.

- Flesh colors range from off-white to yellow, pink, or purple.
- Lower in beta-carotene compared to sweet potatoes.



Nutritional Benefits of Sweet Potatoes

- Complex carbohydrate – Supports stable energy and blood sugar control.
- High in fiber – More fiber than oatmeal (when eaten with the skin).
- Rich in beta-carotene (Vitamin A) – Supports eye health & immune function.
- Good source of Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, and Vitamin E.
- Contains potassium, calcium, magnesium, and iron.
- Fat-free, cholesterol-free, and low in sodium.

How to Choose & Store Sweet Potatoes

- Pick firm, small-to-medium potatoes with smooth, unblemished skin.
- Store in a cool, dry, dark place – Not in the refrigerator, as they can dry out.



Delicious Ways to Enjoy Sweet Potatoes

- Baked, mashed, or roasted – Try with olive oil, garlic, cinnamon, or nutmeg.
- Add to salads, soups, stews, and casseroles.
- Use in baked goods like muffins and breads.
- Slice and bake as fries or add to homemade pizza.

Try These Recipes!

Roasted Sweet Potato Salad

Roast sweet potatoes and red bell peppers, then serve over spinach or arugula with white balsamic vinegar. Add goat cheese and grilled chicken for a satisfying meal.

Oven-Baked Sweet Potatoes

1. Preheat oven to 400°F
2. Clean and pierce 8 medium sweet potatoes with a fork
3. Bake for 45-60 minutes until tender
4. Cut in half and add butter, salt, pepper, and cinnamon

Microwave Baked Sweet Potatoes

1. Prick potatoes all over with a fork
2. Microwave on high for 8-10 minutes, turning once

Sweet potatoes are a nutrient-packed, versatile food that can be part of a balanced, healthy diet. Try adding them to your meals today!

We're committed to your health. Contact us today for more information.

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