

# Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

## Sweet Potatoes: Not Just for Thanksgiving!



November is Sweet Potato Awareness Month! Sweet potatoes are often a part of Thanksgiving dinner, but why not enjoy them all winter long? These nutritious tubers are very versatile.

Sweet potatoes come in a variety of colors, including orange, white, and purple. Orange and purple sweet potatoes are high in antioxidants, which help fight inflammation and may protect against cancer. All sweet potatoes give you vitamins A and C, fiber, and potassium.

One cup of cooked sweet potato with skin provides 6.6 g of fiber, about one-fourth of your daily fiber recommendation. The fiber in sweet potatoes feeds the “good gut bugs” that are important for gut health and keep you regular. The vitamin A prevents vision loss and improves eye health. The vitamin C promotes healthy skin, helps heal wounds, and enhances immune function. Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure.

You can enjoy sweet potatoes in many ways—mashed, grilled, steamed, microwaved, even in pancakes. Try today’s Sweet Potato Fries recipe!

Source:

[Produce for Better Health Foundation](https://www.fruitsandveggies.org), [fruitsandveggies.org](https://www.fruitsandveggies.org)

## Sweet Potato Fries

Serving Size: 2/3 cup fries and 1 tablespoon dip | Serves: 6

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes (about 4 medium)
- 1 tablespoon oil (canola or vegetable)
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

### Dip:

- 1/4 cup light mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, chili powder, or paprika

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Rinse potatoes under running water. Scrub potatoes well.
3. Cut the potatoes in half lengthwise. Lay each potato half flat and slice into half-round shapes about 1/4” thick.
4. Combine potatoes, oil, and salt in a bowl. Stir so potatoes are covered with oil.
5. Grease cookie sheet with oil and lay potato slices in a single layer.
6. Bake for about 30 minutes, turning after 15 minutes.
7. Mix the dip ingredients together while potatoes are baking.
8. Serve immediately. These are best when served hot.

### Nutrition information per serving:

150 calories, 4g total fat, 0.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 5mg cholesterol, 220mg sodium, 26g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 6g sugar, 2g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)



[www.extension.iastate.edu](http://www.extension.iastate.edu)

## November 15: Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day

When in doubt, throw it out! To keep your family safe, keep leftovers for only three to four days in the refrigerator. Label condiments with the date you open them. Below is a list of how long they can last.

- Olives: 2 weeks
- Barbeque Sauce: 4 months
- Pickles: 1–3 months
- Horseradish: 3–4 months
- Relish: 9 months
- Hot sauce: 6 months
- Salad dressing: 1–3 months
- Taco Sauce: 1 month
- Ketchup: 6 months
- Soy Sauce: 1 month
- Mayonnaise: 1–2 months
- Worcestershire Sauce: 1 year
- Mustard: 1 year
- Jams/Jelly: 6 months to 1 year

Source: [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov), [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

## November 29: Throw Out Your Leftovers Day

This is a good reminder to either eat or freeze Thanksgiving leftovers within three to four days. To handle leftovers safely, use the following guidelines:

1. Refrigerate food within two hours after cooking to keep it safe.
2. Eat or freeze leftovers within four days.
3. Use labels or masking tape and a black marker to write dates on food for the refrigerator or freezer. If you label leftovers in the refrigerator with the four-day-later date, you will see right away the last day you can safely eat them.
4. Use Food Safety Charts, [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov), to learn how long food can be safely stored in the refrigerator or freezer.
5. Learn more about leftover food, [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov).

Source: [UNL](http://UNL), [food.unl.edu/november-food-calendar](http://food.unl.edu/november-food-calendar)

## Activity—A Natural Mood Booster!

When the sun shines less in fall and winter, that can depress our mood. Regular physical activity lifts our spirits by releasing feel-good endorphins. Aim for 30 minutes of activity three to five days a week. You can engage in three 10-minute bouts of activity a day, if 30 minutes all at once is daunting. Try these ideas for indoor physical activity during the cold and icy months:

- Turn on the radio and dance.
- March in place while watching your favorite TV show.
- Set an alarm to walk around your house or office every hour during the day.
- Climb stairs.
- Use workout videos.
  - Explore streaming channels to find those that are free.
  - Borrow an exercise video from your local library.
  - Visit [Spend Smart. Eat Smart.](http://Spend Smart. Eat Smart.), [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu), for free physical activity videos.