

Sweet Potato Valentines



Bake a sweet potato for your sweetheart! Slice a nice, plump baked sweet potato in half lengthwise, just to its middle, then cut only halfway through it the rest of the way down: when you open it up, you'll get a heart shape.



Sweet potatoes are one of my favorite foods—especially in the winter when it is cold outside. Eating vegetables like sweet potatoes is a great way for everyone in your family to get important nutrients and stay healthy—and they taste great! Celebrate Valentine's Day with this month's recipe of heart-shaped sweet potatoes, and share the love with your family and friends.

Deval Patrick
Governor of Massachusetts

■ ADULT: YES ■ HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES ■ TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR AND 10 MINUTES ■ MAKES: 4 SERVINGS



WASH your hands with soap and water and dry them.

CLEAN the counter top with a sponge.

GATHER all your kitchen gear and ingredients and put them on the counter.

SCRUB all the fruits and vegetables and lay them out on a dishtowel to dry.

PREPARE your ingredients, which means you may have to do something before you get started with the instructions.

KITCHEN GEAR

Measuring spoons

Baking pan

Sharp knife (adult needed)

Fork

INGREDIENTS

4 sweet potatoes, scrubbed clean

4 teaspoons unsalted butter or olive oil

½ teaspoon dried thyme

½ teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn the oven on and set it to 425 degrees.
2. Put the sweet potatoes in the baking pan and, using the tip of the knife, poke them in a few places to make teeny holes (this is so the steam can escape while they're baking). Put the baking pan in the oven and bake until tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
3. Slice each potato open very carefully (remember, it's a hot potato and lots of steam will escape), in half lengthwise to its middle, then halfway through it the rest of the way down. Divide the butter, thyme, and salt among the sweet potatoes, and mash the seasoning in a bit with a fork.

Tip: Don't forget to eat the skin! It's full of nutrients, and tasty too.

SWEET POTATO SUNDAE BAR

Give each person a baked sweet potato, then put out little dishes of toppings so everyone can make theirs just the way they like. Try:

- Unsalted butter or olive oil, and salt
- Crumbled feta cheese or cottage cheese
- Fresh herbs—like chives, cilantro, or parsley
- Sliced scallions or sautéed onions
- Dried cherries or cranberries
- Toasted walnuts or pecans, or roasted peanuts

Safety Tip Get an adult's permission and help with all sharp knives, appliances (blender and food processor), the stove or oven, and hot ingredients.

IN THE U.S., WE USE “SWEET POTATO” AND “YAM” TO MEAN THE SAME THING, BUT TRUE YAMS ARE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SPECIES, NATIVE TO AFRICA AND ASIA.

HEALTHY HEROES:

Red Fire Farm, Granby MA

Sarah and Ryan Voiland run this 115-acre certified-organic vegetable farm, which grows more than 300 different varieties of vegetables, berries, garden plants, and flowers. They sell and distribute their produce and pasture-raised organic eggs all over the state, including at the Boston Farmers' Market on Thursdays! Meet them there, or get information about CSA (Community Supported Agriculture—what people mean when they talk about having a “farm share”) membership at www.redfirefarm.com

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

Sweet potatoes grow underground. They are in the same plant family as the morning glory flower.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2010, U.S. consumers bought nearly **12 million** pounds of sweet potatoes.

A single sweet potato gives you **26%** of your daily fiber, **65%** of your daily vitamin C, and **769%** of your vitamin A!

Sweet potatoes were grown in Central America as far back as **5000** years ago.



Red Fire Farm grows mostly the Beauregard variety of sweet potatoes with their delicious orange flesh, along with a white type called O'Henry, and a purple-skinned variety called Japanese White.

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