

KIDS CLUB

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to week 10 of our ChopChop Kids Club newsletter! (If you missed the last one, it's [here](#).) This week we're making sweet potato fries. We love sweet potatoes! Why? They're delicious and versatile, for one thing: You can roast, steam, or mash them, or cut them up and add them to soups or stews, where they turn creamy and luscious. Plus, they're full of vitamins and nutrients, and that's pretty sweet.




CHOPCHOP
FAMILY

Sweet Potato Fries

These crisp-edged fries are sweet and delicious. Feel free to ignore our slicing instructions and cut the sweet potatoes however you like: into wedges, slices, sticks, or even cubes. The trick is making them all the same thickness so they're done cooking at the same time—and making them thin enough that they cook through without burning. Dip the fries in ketchup or whatever else you like to dip your fries in.

■ HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES ■ TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES ■ MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

KITCHEN GEAR

Cutting board
Sharp knife (adult needed)
Large bowl
Measuring spoons
Large rimmed baking sheet
Pot holders

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large sweet potatoes, skin scrubbed clean
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on the counter.

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 425 degrees.
2. Cut each sweet potato in half lengthwise, then cut each half in half again, and then each quarter in half once again. You will end up with 8 wedges from each potato.
3. Put the sweet potatoes, oil, and salt in the bowl and use your clean hands to mix well.
4. Once the oven temperature has reached 425 degrees, slide the sweet potatoes onto the baking sheet and spread them out evenly. Bake until golden brown and tender, about 35 minutes. Serve right away.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sweet potatoes are orange because of a nutrient called beta-carotene, which keeps your eyes and skin healthy and strong.





DO YOU HAVE MORE SWEET POTATOES?

Try one of these recipes.

- **Basic Baked Sweet Potatoes:** www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/basic-baked-sweet-potatoes
- **Sweet Potato and Chickpea Curry:** www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/sweet-potato-and-chickpea-curry
- **Indian Vegetable Curry:** www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/indian-vegetable-curry

◀ Sweet Potato and Chickpea Curry

Kitchen Skill: How to use a Knife



While you are learning, be sure to take your time and keep your eyes on the knife at all times. Always cut on a cutting board to avoid damaging the countertop, and choose a nonslip one for safety. Adults should wash and dry knives.

1. Hold the knife in the hand you use to write with, and grip it firmly around the handle.
2. Use your other hand to steady the food, keeping your fingers curled under, away from the knife blade. Pay attention to where the blade is. As it moves forward, your food-holding fingers should move backward. The distance between the blade and your other hand should always stay the same.
3. Cut round or cylindrical foods (like a sweet potato or zucchini) in half before slicing so they can rest on their flat side instead of rolling around.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

In the U.S., when we say “sweet potato” and “yam” we mean the same thing—but true yams are a completely different species, native to Africa and Asia. Africa and Asia are two of the seven continents. (Do you know the names of the other five continents?)

Use a map to figure out which of these countries are on the continent of Asia and which are on the continent of Africa.

China	Benin
Uganda	Bhutan
Philippines	Vietnam
Sudan	Japan
Nigeria	Indonesia
Chad	Togo
Egypt	Thailand

WORD FUN: POTATO/POTAHTO

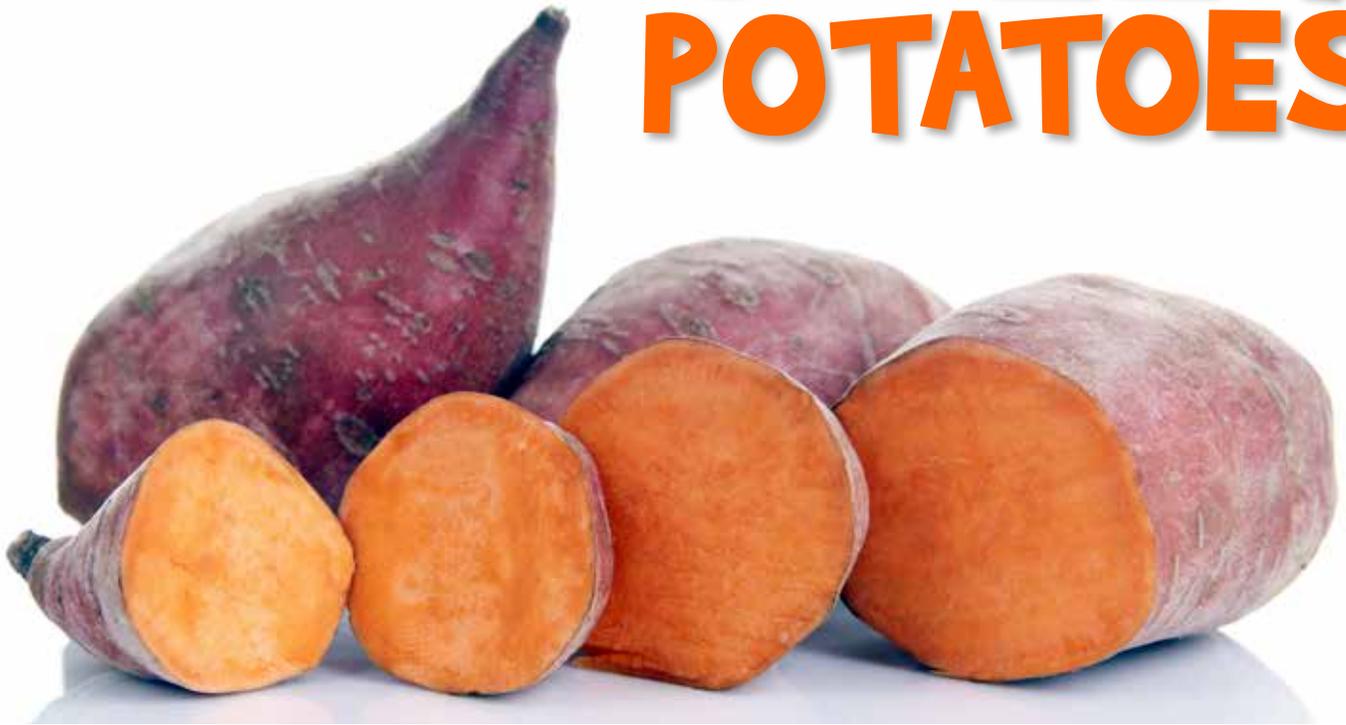
Have you ever heard that **classic jazz song** with the lyrics “You like tomato, I like to-MAH-to. You like potato, I like po-TAH-to”? There are probably words that you and your family pronounce differently from other people and their families. This might be because of where you live, where your family came from, or the culture you grew up in. Can you think of any? Here are some to get you started: neither, pajamas, aunt, pecan, and envelope.

GET MOVING: HOT POTATO

Hot Potato is one of our favorite backyard (or living room) games. To play, everyone stands in a circle except for one person, who controls starting and stopping the music. Someone brings a “potato” into the circle—this can be a ball, a bean bag, or a stuffed animal (or a real potato if you want). When the music starts, the person with the potato hands it to the person next to them. Players continue passing it around the circle until the music stops. Whoever is holding the potato when the music stops has the “hot potato” and is out. Now they become the music starter and stopper and the other person joins the circle.

ALL ABOUT

SWEET POTATOES



What is a sweet potato?

A sweet potato is not simply an orange potato, but they do have some things in common! Like a regular potato, a sweet potato is a tuber: a vegetable that grows underground. It looks like a large potato with pointy ends, and you eat it cooked. The flesh is sweeter than a regular potato, and it's typically orange, though some are white, yellow, or purple. A sweet potato is much more nutritious than a regular potato too.

How do you store them? Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place. Avoid storing them in the refrigerator, where they can develop mold. Sweet potatoes can keep for a long time (up to a month or even longer), but throw them into the compost pile if they get soft or moldy or start to sprout (or use them to try growing your own—see the next page).

What part do you eat? If you scrub it well, you can eat the skin of a cooked sweet potato in addition to its sweet flesh, but some people prefer to peel them.



How do you prepare them?

Scrub and rinse the sweet potatoes under running water to remove any dirt before cooking.

- **Oven-Baked:** Use a fork to poke holes all over the skin of the sweet potatoes. Put them on a rimmed baking sheet and bake in a 425 degree oven until soft, 45 to 60 minutes. Cut the sweet potatoes open and serve with olive oil or butter, salt, and pepper.
- **Slow-Cooked** (using a slow cooker): Use a fork to poke holes all over the skin of the sweet potatoes. Put them in a slow cooker, add $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, cover, and cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 8 hours.
- **Boiled:** Peel and cube the sweet potatoes. Cook in a pot of boiling water until tender, about 12 minutes, and then drain. Mash and then add a little milk, plus salt and pepper to taste.



Grow a Sweet Potato Vine

Did you know that each sweet potato holds a secret? Set the bottom half of it in water, and the potato will sprout a vine. In the old days, people kept sweet potato vines as houseplants, and you can too. They're lush and pretty and really fun to grow.

WHAT YOU NEED

A firm sweet potato (If you can find an organic sweet potato, it is more likely to sprout because it hasn't been sprayed to stop it from sprouting, but regular sweet potatoes will work too.)
3 toothpicks
A jar or glass with an opening that is a little bigger than your potato
A warm, sunny windowsill
Fresh water

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Look for the middle of the sweet potato and stick all 3 toothpicks about 1½ inches into the potato. The toothpicks should be evenly spaced around the middle of the potato. You may need the help of your adult because it can be a little tricky to stick the toothpicks in.
2. Once you have 3 toothpicks sticking out of the sweet potato, rest them on the edge of the jar or glass with the pointy end of the potato facing down into the jar.
3. Fill the jar or glass with enough water that it covers the bottom third of the sweet potato.
4. Put the jar or glass on a sunny windowsill and change the water every couple of days.
5. Wait patiently. It may take a few weeks or even a month before you see sprouts, but once the sprouts show up, they grow pretty fast. You can have fun measuring how much they grow every day!