

NUTRITION TO NOURISH



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Happy Thanksgiving!

Happy Thanksgiving, Friends! My hope is that you all have something to be thankful for this season and choose to focus on your blessings as our holiday celebrations and gatherings commence.

While most of us likely have traditions of hearty Thanksgiving meals (yes, I used the plural because it's a busy eating season with sometimes two big meals in one day (insert gasp from Mary Beth!), I encourage you to use this Thanksgiving as a reminder to be thankful and to also do something that others will be thankful for (no matter if you get a thank you or not).

Thankfulness and generosity are a powerful health duo. According to Harvard Health Publishing, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. "Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships."

According to Geisinger Health, generosity includes health benefits of lowering blood pressure, reducing stress and depression, and improving overall health for a longer life.

Let's look for ways to be generous this Thanksgiving, and remember sometimes it's the small things that mean the most. As ideas, consider sending someone a thank-you card, surprising a friend or coworker with a coffee on a stressful day, donating blood, donating to a canned food drive, or donating to a needy family through community organizations. Your gratitude and generosity will benefit both you and others.

Happy and Healthy Eating,

Mary Beth

*<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>

*<https://www.geisinger.org/health-and-wellness/wellness-articles/2021/10/15/16/17/3-ways-generosity-can-improve-your-health#:~:text=Research%20has%20shown%20that%20people,Gallagher.>

It's November—What's Still in Season?

As we see the daily high temperatures decrease into the 40's and experience frosts at night, thoughts of gardening and fresh produce may take a back seat to other activities on the to-do list. Surprisingly (or maybe not so much if you've been around Virginia for a while), there are still fresh produce options for every month of the year—including November! According to the Virginia Fruit and Vegetable Availability Calendar, there are

several fresh options this month that include:

- ⇒ Apples
- ⇒ Asian Pears
- ⇒ Beets
- ⇒ Broccoli
- ⇒ Cabbage
- ⇒ Greens and Spinach

- ⇒ Herbs
- ⇒ Peppers
- ⇒ Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes

Look for ways to incorporate these into your weekly cooking as well as Thanksgiving meals during this season, and look for recipe ideas to help you in this issue!

*www.viriniagrown.com

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"We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent."

H.A. Ironside



Sweet Potatoes

Because sweet potatoes are still in season and likely to be found on your Thanksgiving table, they are the produce item of the month. Unlike white (Irish) potatoes that belong to the potato family, sweet potatoes are part of the morning glory family.

To get the highest antioxidant benefit, choose sweet potatoes with the deepest orange, deep orange, or purple flesh color. In

the grocery store, select varieties with the darkest skin color.

If the varieties are listed in grocery stores or Farmer's Markets, look for Stokes Purple or Carolina Ruby varieties that are high in anthocyanins and overall antioxidants, respectively.

Sweet Potatoes—the Power of Purple

Anthocyanins are a pigment giving deep red, blue, and purple fruits and vegetables their color. They are part of the larger group of phytochemicals (naturally occurring chemicals in plants) called flavonoids. Research has shown that flavonoids are a powerful nutrient that are part of the reason plant-based diets are consistently associated with health benefits.

Anthocyanins have been shown to lower blood pressure, decrease the risk of heart disease, improve brain function, and reduce cancer risk.

There is no known amount to ensure they are beneficial, so it's best to include deep red, blue, and purple fruits and vegetables (including purple sweet potatoes).

Research from the American Institute for Cancer Research has shown that purple sweet potatoes offer a mother lode of anthocyanins. They have the same buttery, sweet flavor of their better-known orange cousins and can be prepared in similar ways. They are available in many grocery stores and may offer a tasty, cancer-

fighting improvement to your diet.

**<https://www.aicr.org/resources/blog/lab-study-purple-sweet-potatoes-as-colon-cancer-fighters/>*

**<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/anthocyanins/>*



Storing and Cooking Sweet Potatoes

To preserve the taste and nutritional value of sweet potatoes, storing and cooking is very important.

Sweet potatoes can be stored for a week at normal room temperatures, but increase their life by storing them in an unsealed bag in a dark and cool place. The refrigerator is too cool and can cause a flavor change. Ideally, they should be stored at temperatures between 50-60°F with good air circulation for maximum

eating longevity.

Cooking methods are important to maintain all of the health benefits of sweet potatoes. Because most of the nutrients in them are water soluble, cooking them in water will cause a loss of antioxidant value. Instead, steam, roast, or bake them to increase their antioxidant value.

** Eating on the Wild Side by Jo Robinson*



Ask the RD

Question: Are sweet potatoes healthier than white potatoes?

The short answer is yes, they are healthier than white potatoes. The long answer involves a few factors:

1. Glycemic index (GI) — The GI is a value assigned to foods based on how quickly and how high those foods cause increases in blood glucose levels. Foods low on the GI scale tend to release glucose slowly and steadily. Foods high on the glycemic index release glucose rapidly. Sweet potatoes have a
2. Antioxidants—sweet potatoes are richer in anthocyanins, a protective phytochemical, compared to white potatoes. This makes them a more powerful force in cancer risk reduction.
3. Vitamin A— This is a powerful antioxidant that protects cells of the body from damage caused by free radicals. One cup of sweet potato has 18,869 IUs while 1 cup of

lower GI (45) compared to white potatoes (75-100)

white potatoes has no Vitamin A.



White potatoes are still a good source of fiber, potassium, and Vitamin C. You can continue to include them, but look for ways to increase sweet potatoes in your diet too!

*<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/glycemic-index-and-glycemic-load-for-100-foods#:~:text=The%20glycemic%20index%20is%20a,glycemic%20index%20release%20glucose%20rapidly.>

Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Honey and Cinnamon

From: Food Network website at <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/tyler-florence/roasted-sweet-potatoes-with-honey-butter-recipe-1946538>

Ingredients

- 4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4th cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling potatoes after cooked
- 1/4th cup honey
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Lay the sweet potatoes out in a single layer on a roasting tray. Drizzle the oil, honey, cinnamon, salt, and pepper over the potatoes. Roast for 25-30 minutes in oven until tender.
3. Take sweet potatoes out of the oven and transfer them to a serving platter. Drizzle with more extra virgin olive oil, if desired.

Tip from Mary Beth: You can omit the drizzle of oil after cooking and even decrease the olive oil in the main recipe. If you decrease the oil, use your clean hands or a cooking brush to ensure the outside of each cube is coated with the oil before cooking.





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Potatoes and Root Vegetables Anna

from *Better Homes and Gardens* website at <https://www.bhg.com/recipe/potatoes-and-root-vegetables-anna/>



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1.5 pound russet potatoes, peeling and thinly sliced
- 1 pound root vegetables, such as golden beets, celeriac, and/or parsnips, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1, 8-10 oz. sweet potato, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1.5 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tablespoons chopped chives

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. For brown butter, in a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium low. Cook 5 to 7 minutes more or until butter turns a light golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and add garlic. Let stand 5 minutes.
2. Drizzle 2 Tbsp. of the garlic butter into a 10-inch cast-iron skillet. Arrange one-third of the potato and vegetable slices in a circular pattern in skillet, overlapping slices. Drizzle with 1.5 Tbsp. butter and sprinkle with some of the salt and pepper. Repeat layers two more times.
3. Cover skillet with buttered foil. Place skillet over medium-high heat 2 to 3 minutes or until it begins to sizzle. Transfer skillet to oven and bake 30 minutes. Remove foil; baking 20-30 minutes more or until golden and potatoes and vegetables are tender. Let stand 10 minutes. Loosen potatoes and vegetables from skillet and invert onto a serving plate. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and chives.

Tips from Mary Beth: use only 1/4th cup of butter to decrease fat and calories; omit cheese if you don't like it, want to decrease calories and fat, or are lactose intolerant.

