



LW
Extension

*Extending the Knowledge and Resources of the
University System
to the People of Waupaca County and Wisconsin*
Waupaca County Courthouse,
811 Harding Street, Waupaca, WI 54981
715 258-6230 715 258-6232 (FAX)



Sensational Sweet Potatoes

Grade Level: 2-5

Total Lesson Time: 15 -20 Minutes



Lesson Overview

Students involved in the Farm to School AmeriCorp classroom will learn about locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Objectives

Students will fulfill educational expectations by meeting school standards and benchmarks in:

1. Reading and Language Arts: Using general skill and strategies of the reading process.
2. Mathematics: Understand and apply basic measurement skills.
3. Science: Appreciate the process of growing and eating healthy food.
4. Social Studies: Learn about relationships between themselves, farming and local environment.

Preparation

1. Students should wash and sanitize hands before working with foods.
2. Assemble activity props, pictures, and equipment for session.

Procedures

Introduction

*Read the story [Sweet Potato Pie](#)

*Share some interesting facts about sweet potatoes with the students.

Sweet Potato Facts:

The sweet potato is one of only a few cultivated vegetable crops that originated in the Americas. The wild sweet potato has been traced back to Peru as early as 8000 B.C. People have been eating sweet potatoes for over 10,000 years!

A favorite of herbivore (plant-eating) dinosaurs, sweet potatoes have been around since prehistoric times.

Sweet potatoes and white or red potatoes are not related at all. Sweet potatoes belong to the Morning Glory family and require warm growing conditions.

Sweet potatoes are roots that store nutrients over times when the plant cannot grow. Potatoes are tubers, or the underground part of the stem and is planted to grow the next growing season. Both sweet potatoes and regular potatoes are vegetables that grows underground.

People often call “yams” sweet potatoes and “sweet potatoes” yams but they are not the same thing. Yams are a tuber with rough skin lower in nutrients while sweet potatoes are a root with smooth skin and higher in nutrients.

Native Americans called sweet potatoes *batatas*.

When Christopher Columbus landed on America’s shores in 1492, the Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes. Columbus and his men loved the tasty sweet potatoes so much that they brought them back to Europe to grow their own.

George Washington, our first American President, was a sweet potato farmer before he became our President.

A man with a similar name, George Washington Carver born 1864, studied farming and nutrition. He thought of new ways farmers could earn more money. He created 100 new uses for sweet potatoes. Some of those were; flour, ink, rubber, tapioca flour, vinegar, a glue for postage stamps, and 500 different shades of fabric dye.

Nutritional Value



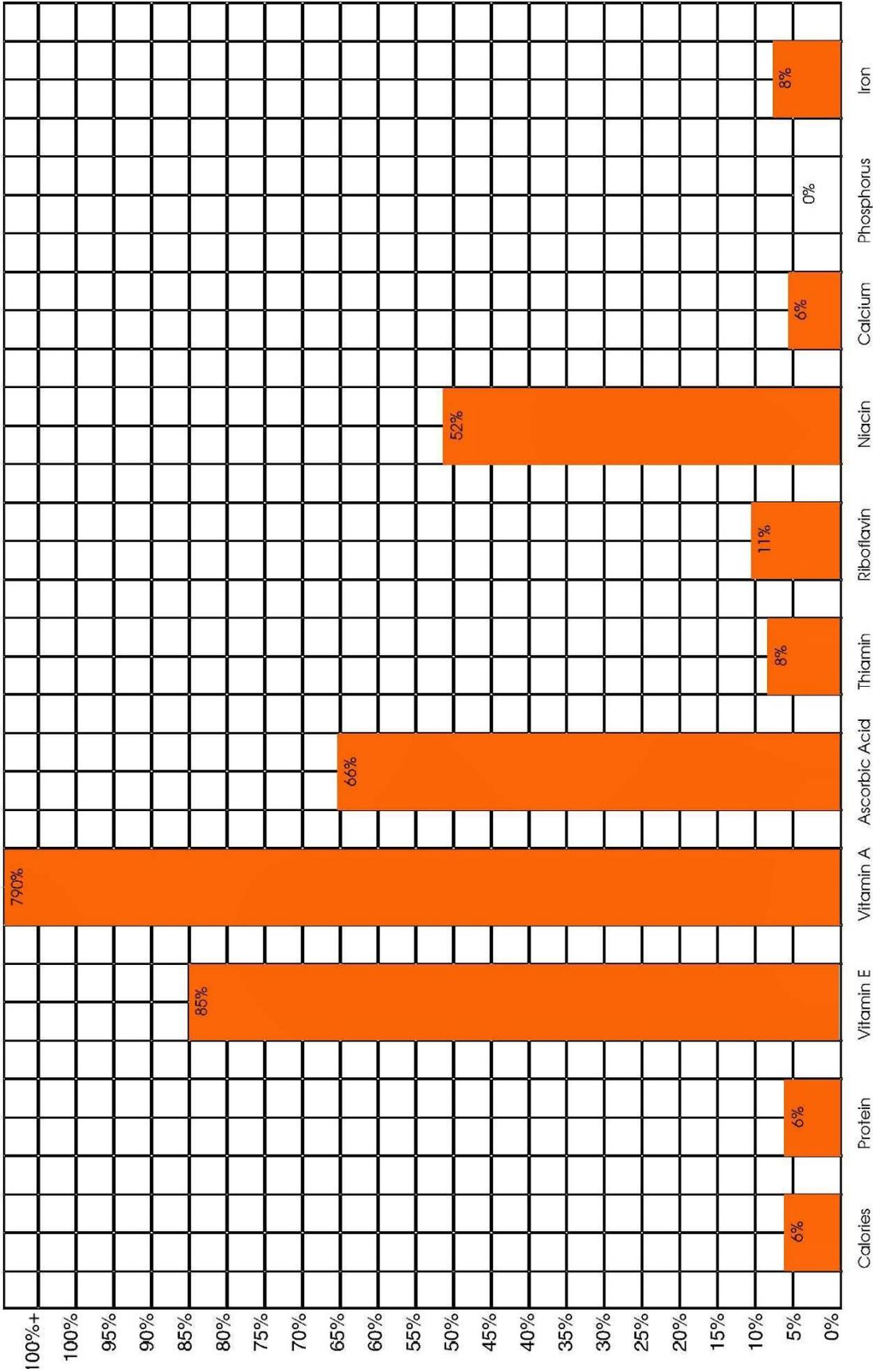
The inside of a sweet potato is orange. It is in the orange/yellow color group. Can you name other yellow/orange fruits and vegetables? *Corn, butternut squash, yellow peppers, pumpkin, oranges, lemons, pineapple, carrots, peaches, grapefruit, yellow apples.*

The sweet potato ranks extremely high in nutritional value. The orange color tells us that sweet potatoes are full of nutrients.

Name _____

This graph shows _____

Sweet potato Nutrients



Vitamin A- Helps your body grow normally and fights off infection

Vitamin B6 – for a healthy appetite

Manganese – mineral for bone growth

Fiber – to help you go to the bathroom

Potassium – to a healthy heartbeat

Iron- When you do not get enough iron from the foods you eat, you might feel more tired than normal.

One serving size of a sweet potato is ½ cup. This equals 1 serving of our daily vegetable intake.

Sweet potatoes can be prepared in many different ways. They can be baked, microwaved, steamed, boiled, mashed, grilled, French fried, toasted “chips”, sautéed, or eaten fresh.

Recipe Assembly

Explain to the students that today they will prepare a nutritious dip that they may or may not use to dip their sweet potato sticks. If time allows have one group of students make the dip and the other group can peel and slice the sweet potatoes into sticks.

Fresh Vegetable Dip

1 cup low calorie mayonnaise or sour cream

1 cup plain yogurt

1 Tablespoon Parsley

1 Tablespoon Dill Weed

1 Tablespoon Onion, minced fresh or 1 teaspoon dry

1 Tablespoon seasoned salt



Mix all ingredients together until smooth. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Tasting Activity

Talk to the students about the many words we can use to describe foods and flavors. Ask the students to use all of their senses to describe the taste and flavor of the dip and the sweet potato sticks. Discuss the look, smell, taste, and texture. What other descriptive words can we use instead of yum or yuck?

Classroom Activity

Nutrition: The students as a follow up and lead in to the next lesson will do the “Color Way” from Pick a Better Snack Series of the Iowa Nutrition Network. “How Many Fruits and Vegetables Did I Eat For Lunch”



Science: Grow a Sweet Potato Vine

Sweet potatoes in the U.S. are grown mostly in the South. They are planted in the spring by "slips." These are the small rooted pieces of the vine that grow from the "eyes" or buds of the potato.

The sweet potato produces vine-like stems that resemble the philodendron plant. Place the sweet potato in a container of water. Keep the top 1/3 of the potato exposed by placing toothpicks into the sides. The pointed end should be down in the water. In a few weeks a vine with several stems will begin to sprout. The stems are weak; tie the stems to a stake.

Sweet potatoes like a bright, sunny location and require care like house plants such as ivy.

Fertilize about once a month.

If the sweet potato vine gets too long, cut it back a few inches to force the vine to get bushier. The tip of the vine that was pinched off can be rooted in water or moist soil.

Your sweet potato vines can be planted outside in late May to produce sweet potatoes that can be dug and eaten in the fall.



Writing: Sweet Potato Pals

Tell about a day in the life of your sweet potato pal when a great change took place. It could be planting day, the day of a big storm, harvest time, a day in the market, or any other day when a big change happened. Tell a story about what happened to your sweet potato pal that day.

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