



## 7 Reasons to Eat More Sweet Potatoes

If you're just saving sweet potatoes for the holidays, don't. They make delicious sides any time of year, and they're filling enough to be the main dish, too.

These sweet spuds are packed with vital nutrients and boast numerous health benefits. But sweet potatoes are not actually potatoes. They are root vegetables that belong to the morning glory family (which includes yams).

If you're not already incorporating sweet potatoes into your diet, here are just a few reasons why you should be.

### 1. They promote gut health.

Sweet potatoes are high in two types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Because your body cannot digest either, the fibrous portions of the sweet potato will remain in

your digestive tract and provide several health benefits to your gut.

These benefits include helping absorb water, preventing constipation, and keeping your intestinal lining healthy. In addition to their high level of fiber, the high level of antioxidants in purple sweet potatoes has been linked to growth in healthy gut bacteria, according to some test-tube studies.

### 2. They support vision.

If you're like me, your mom told you that eating carrots would help your vision. The same goes for sweet potatoes.

The antioxidant responsible for their orange color, beta-carotene, is the same antioxidant that's found in carrots. Once consumed, beta-carotene is converted into vitamin A, which is used to form light-detecting receptors in your eyes.

Some studies have also found the antioxidant in purple sweet potatoes that gives them their color, anthocyanin, to be beneficial to the eyes as well.

### 3. They support your immune system.

We've already established that sweet potatoes are packed with beta-carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A. Vitamin A is key to a healthy immune system, helping to maintain healthy



mucous membranes in the lining of your gut. This lining can protect against many disease-causing pathogens.

#### **4. They may help manage diabetes.**

Cooked sweet potatoes are low on the glycemic index, meaning they won't raise your blood sugar as quickly as those foods that are higher on the glycemic index (like white potatoes). Plus, their high-fiber content can slow the absorption of sugar, preventing blood sugar spikes.

#### **5. They can help manage stress.**

One serving of sweet potatoes provides one-third of your daily value of magnesium. According to studies, magnesium deficiency has been linked to a risk for depression, anxiety, and stress. Magnesium has also been found to reduce insomnia, which can be a cause of anxiety and depression.

#### **6. They're anti-inflammatory.**

Because of their rich nutritional profile, sweet potatoes possess many anti-inflammatory properties. One nutrient in specific, choline, has been found to reduce inflammation.

And the anthocyanins, or the antioxidant found in purple sweet potatoes, are essential in reducing inflammation as well.

With time, chronic inflammation can lead to tissue death, internal scarring, and even the development of disease.

#### **7. They might lower your risk of cancer.**

Sweet potatoes are packed with antioxidants, compounds that protect your body from free-radical damage. Free-radical damage is linked to the development of cancer and other chronic illnesses.

In fact, test-tube studies have found that anthocyanins, the antioxidant that gives purple sweet potatoes their color, can slow the growth of certain types of cancer cells. Another antioxidant found in sweet potatoes, beta-carotene, has been found to reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer.

*[allrecipes.com/article/benefits-of-sweet-potatoes](http://allrecipes.com/article/benefits-of-sweet-potatoes)*

