

Indigenous Food Hubs

2025 Harvest of the Month



MARCH: SWEET POTATOES

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Tribes, especially in the southern and eastern parts of the United States, eat sweet potatoes as a key part of their diet and agricultural practices. It was and is important nutritionally but also culturally, holding a special role in ceremonies and other cultural practices. Taíno people of the Caribbean called sweet potatoes “batatas.”

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Sweet Potato: From South America with a smooth, thin skin and a yellow, tan, or red/dark orange color. They are short and blocky and taste moist and sweet.

Yams: From Africa or Asia with a rough and scaly skin and brown or black-brown color. They have long tapered ends and taste dry and starchy.

SELECTING PRODUCE

- Look for firm, dark, dry, smooth sweet potatoes with no spots.
- Store in a cool, dry place like a pantry (not the refrigerator).
- Use them within a week, ideally.
- Wash them only when you're ready to cook them.

NUTRITION AND FUN FACTS

- Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of beta carotene, fiber, vitamins B6 and E, and potassium. All aid your metabolism in producing energy for cognitive performance.
- They are also a great source of iron and antioxidants, which reduce inflammation and oxidative stress.
- Sweet potatoes are, in fact, not potatoes! Potatoes are tubers (meaning they are part of the stem of the plant), and sweet potatoes are roots.
- The Center for Science in the Public Interest ranked sweet potatoes at the number one most nutritious vegetable!
- “Yam” is used interchangeably with sweet potato, but they are a different species, typically from Africa or Asia.



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SWEET POTATO AND BISON HASH



COOK TIME

25 Minutes



SERVINGS

6-7

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced 1 lb
- ground bison 1 onion,
- chopped 2 cloves garlic,
- minced 1 tsp smoked
- paprika Salt and pepper
- to taste 2 tbsp
- vegetable oil



DIFFICULTY:

☐ EASY ☒ MEDIUM ☐ HARD

DIRECTIONS

1. In a skillet, heat oil and sauté onion and garlic until fragrant.
2. Add the ground bison and cook until browned. Season with paprika, salt, and pepper.
3. In a separate pan, cook the diced sweet potatoes in oil until crispy and tender.
4. Combine the cooked bison and sweet potatoes, mixing well. Cook together for a few more minutes, allowing flavors to meld.

NOTES

Traditionally, the Sioux and many Great Plains tribes heavily relied on buffalo for food, clothing and tools. Bison meat was and has remained a primary source of protein for many Native people today.

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