



Harvest Objectives

Children will describe the outside and inside of the sweet potato.
Children will identify that sweet potatoes grow underground.
Children will taste a piece of sweet potato.



Harvest Vocab

Outside Inside Firm Smooth Vegetable

Materials & Prep

Sweet Potato
Brown paper bags
Chalkboard/Whiteboard and chalk/whiteboard markers
Knife & Cutting Board
Pictures of fruits or vegetables (optional)
Images (included at end of learning plan)
Sweet Potato fries—frozen, or optional recipe below (enough for each child to taste small ¼ pieces)
Taste Test Chart
Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)
Taste Test Extension supplies (optional)

Literature Connections

Dr. Strong and Sweet Potatoes by Yori Takeda
The Hungry Pua'a and the Sweet Sweet Potato by Leonard J. Villanueva
Sweet Potato Pie by Anne Rockwell

Warm Up

- In order to engage the children and activate prior knowledge, place whole sweet potatoes in brown paper bags (one per bag). Pass the bags around and have the children feel the sweet potato, without looking and to think of a describing word. Ask them what it feels like and record their responses in a list under the word “Outside.” Then take out the sweet potato and ask the children what it looks like and continue to record responses.
- Write the word “Inside.” Then cut one sweet potato in half. Pass it around and ask the children what they observe and record their responses. What does it look like? Feel like? Smell like?
- Finally, ask them, “What do you think this is? Have they ever seen one before?”

Explain

- Share with the children the word “sweet potato” and write it on top of the warm up list. If nobody mentioned the word smooth in the warm-up, share that now along with other examples. Explain that botanically it is a vegetable (there are no seeds inside). What other vegetables can they think of, without seeds inside? (Carrots, lettuce, asparagus, broccoli,



etc.) If possible, put out pictures of fruits and vegetables and allow the students to think about which ones have no seeds inside.

- Describe how sweet potatoes grow (underground), why we should eat sweet potato (healthy eyes, healthy brains, healthy immune system, and helps digestion) and for each reason come up with an action to help the students remember. For example, for healthy immune system they can shake one finger while saying “no” and then put a hand on their forehead while saying “fever.” Also explain how to pick a good sweet potato (it should be firm, dry and have smooth skin). Please see the next pages for images to share with the children.

Taste Test

- Using the sweet potato fries (optional recipe below), cut quarter pieces for each child to taste.
- Create another chart that says “I Like” with a smiley face and “I Don’t Like” with a sad face. Give each child a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number of children that like sweet potato, and don’t like sweet potato and write that number in each column.
- Review with the students how the sweet potato grows and the health benefits.

Taste Test Extension

Rule of 15 “Put a food on the table at least 15 times to see if a child will accept it.” Susan B. Roberts, Tufts University Nutritionist and Co-author of Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health

For an additional tasting experience, prepare this recipe with children in class using different stations, or ahead of time.

Baked Sweet Potato Fries (20 participants)

(adapted from: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/baked-sweet-potato-sticks-2/>)

8 medium sweet potatoes

1 tablespoon oil (olive, or other)

½ teaspoon paprika or nutmeg (optional)

Salt, to taste

1 plate (per child)

Mixing bowls and spoons

Knife

Cutting Board

1-2 Baking sheet(s)

Oven mitt



1. Rinse sweet potatoes by putting them under running water and rubbing all surfaces to remove any soil. Cut sweet potatoes into sticks. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Invite children to wash their hands and come to the table for a cooking activity.
3. Demonstrate and then have the children help lightly grease a baking sheet. In a large bowl, have the children add the potato sticks, measure the olive oil and paprika/nutmeg and stir.
4. Have each child place three to five fries on the prepared baking sheet and sprinkle on salt.
5. Bake 40 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow to cool, serve and enjoy!

How do Sweet Potatoes grow?



Sweet Potatoes like very warm weather. They need 150 frost free days to develop. They grow underground as part of the root of the plant.



Why should we eat Sweet Potatoes?

Vitamin A



Healthy eyes

Vitamin C



Healthy immune system
(prevents colds, heals cuts)

Vitamin B6



Healthy brains

Fiber



Healthy digestion,
cleans out your system