

Food for Thought

August 2025

Root Vegetables: Good for You

Root vegetables are the “underground” part of a plant that we eat. Root vegetables are high in fiber, low in calories, packed with vitamins A, C, and folic acid, plus many minerals. Wait to wash root vegetables until just before using them. Rinse with cold water and scrub with a vegetable brush to remove dirt. Remember where they are grown!



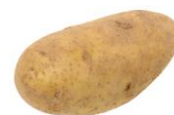
- **Sweet Potatoes** are sometimes called yams. Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry place – not in the refrigerator. Bake or boil sweet potatoes until they are slightly soft. Cooked sweet potatoes make a delicious and nutritious snack – served either hot or cold, sprinkled with a little cinnamon, if desired.
- **Potatoes** are the most popular vegetable in the United States! Boil, bake, mash or microwave them. Try leaving the potato skin on for added fiber and nutrients. Be sure and cut off any green spots or sprouts on potatoes before cooking. Potatoes should not be stored in the refrigerator or next to onions – onions make potatoes spoil.
- **Beets** have the highest sugar content of any vegetable, but they are very low in calories. Try fresh, cooked beets or look for canned beets for variety.
- **Carrots** are sweet and make a quick and easy snack. Those with the brightest orange color have the most nutritional value.
- **Onions** make you cry? To limit tears, chill onion before cutting and be sure to cut into the root end of the onion last. Onions contain antioxidants that can help protect against chronic disease.
- **Turnips** come in a variety of shapes and sizes. The flesh can be white or yellow. Store turnip roots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Peel turnips before cooking. Try them in soup or stew!
- **Jicama** is a cousin to the sweet potato. It tastes like a crispy cross between an apple and a sweet potato. Just peel and cook or enjoy raw dipped in fat-free ranch dressing
- **Radishes** are pungent or sweet in taste with a lot of juice. Radishes can be white, red, purple or black. They are eaten raw, cooked or pickled.
- **Parsnips** are closely related to the carrot but are white or cream in color. Parsnips are usually cooked but can also be eaten raw. They are high in vitamins and minerals, especially potassium.



Meal in a Potato

4 baking potatoes
1 cup shredded reduce fat cheddar cheese
1 1/2 cups frozen broccoli florets, chopped

1 cup low fat ham, cubed
1/2 cup low fat sour cream



1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Cook broccoli florets in microwave, 3 to 4 minutes, until tender/crisp. Set aside.
3. Pierce potatoes. Bake potatoes in microwave on high until tender, 16-18 minutes, turning over after 7 minutes. Cut each potato in half lengthwise. Scoop out most of pulp.
4. Mash pulp with a fork, then combine pulp with ham, sour cream, and broccoli.
5. Spoon the potato mixture in the potato shells. Sprinkle the cheese even over the potatoes.
6. Bake for 10 minutes or until potato mixture is hot and cheese is melted.

Sheet Pan Fajitas

1/2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken (or other protein), sliced into 1/2-inch thick strips
3 bell peppers (red, orange, green or yellow), cored and sliced into strips
1 medium yellow onion, sliced into strips
1 pkg low sodium taco seasoning
3 tablespoons olive oil
8 whole wheat flour tortillas
Optional Toppings: low-fat cheese or sour cream, avocados, cilantro, or diced tomatoes



1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with baking foil.
2. Next, spread bell peppers and onion slices onto baking sheet. Top with meat strips then evenly sprinkle taco seasoning and drizzle olive oil. Toss everything to coat.
3. Spread into an even layer working to keep meat from overlapping.
4. Roast in oven, tossing once halfway through cooking, until veggies are tender and meat has cooked through about 18 - 25 minutes (test a few of the larger pieces to make sure chicken/turkey is 165°F; beef/pork is 145°).
5. Wrap tortillas tightly in foil and warm in oven during last 5 minutes of fajita filling cooking.
6. Serve filling in warm tortillas with desired toppings.

Sources: https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/humannutrition/current_newsletters/good-for-you/goodforyou-documents/goodforyoufall2015.pdf
retrieved 07/31/25

Eat Smart Idaho can help you learn how to eat well for less. For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
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