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PRESS RELEASE
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Sweet Potatoes Offer Variety and Versatility Year-round

BATON ROUGE, La. – Available year-round and surprisingly versatile, sweet potatoes are too good to eat only during the holidays. Add variety to your recipe repertoire with naturally healthy sweet potatoes. These versatile veggies can be baked, broiled, sautéed, fried, steamed, mashed, microwaved, grilled, boiled or even toasted for chips.

Sweet potatoes are more than just side dishes at dinner time. They may also be featured in a variety of breakfast foods, baked goods, cakes, muffins, breads, stews, soups, salads or substituted in virtually any recipe for white potatoes, which –unlike sweet potatoes- contain loads of sugar and carbohydrates. Sweet potatoes can be used interchangeably with winter squash in soups and stews. And they are just as delicious served with pork tenderloin, chicken, lamb or tuna, as they are with the traditional turkey and ham. Sweet potatoes can also be served raw as a great alternative snack for dipping. The sweet potato's naturally sweet flavor complements rum, bourbon, ginger, sweet spices, dark sugars, syrups, pecans, raisins, cranberries, currants and orange juice. But unless you are making a dessert, sweet potatoes are much better when combined with savory herbs and spices like thyme or cumin, instead of cinnamon and nutmeg.

Sweet potatoes are nutritional gold mines. They are loaded with complex carbohydrates and vitamins, but are lacking in fat. For the nearly 12 million Americans counting carbohydrates as part of the Atkins or South Beach plans, the glycemic index plays a critical part in determining acceptable foods. The index ranks how quickly the body converts carbohydrates into sugar; the lower the glycemic index in a food, the less it will cause weight gain. Sweet potatoes rank significantly lower

than white potatoes in the glycemic index, which explains why both carb-counting diets encourage substituting yams for Idaho potatoes.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) ranks the sweet potato as the #1 most nutritious vegetable. Sweet potatoes are loaded with beta-carotene, Vitamin B6, iron, potassium and fiber. The sweet potato is a complex carbohydrate that provides twice the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin A and more than one-third of the requirements for Vitamin C. Their versatility, plus the added health benefits, makes them a great addition to any meal, any time of day. Visit the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission's Web site, www.sweetpotato.org, to find a variety of free sweet potato recipes.

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