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Stickeler's Answer

Stickelers Answer

The answer is **true**.

Stickeler's Puzzle on Page 9

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Kitchen Diva February Is National Sweet Potato Month

Sweet potatoes are one of my favorite tubers, and what better time to celebrate them than National Sweet Potato Awareness Month. I must admit, though, I didn't become a real fan until I found out all of the health benefits and the delicious ways to use this colorful tuber.

The sweet potato is an excellent source of vitamin A, which supports good vision, the immune system and bone growth. It's also a good source of vitamin B-6, magnesium and vitamin C. And it's great for the complexion.

High in fiber and low in fat and calories, this root vegetable is a healthful alternative to snack foods when prepared without added butter, sugar or salt.

Unlike other potatoes, sweet potatoes like long, hot growing seasons. This might explain why it is the state vegetable of North Carolina.

There is a difference between sweet potatoes grown in northern states and those grown in Louisiana. Sweet potatoes produced in the north are mostly "firm" and tend to be drier, more mealy and yellow in flesh. Folks in Louisiana enjoy the second type, "soft," which is higher in natural sugar. Louisiana sweet potatoes are moister and have a bright orange flesh color. Most often, it is the "soft" type that's referred to as a yam.

Sweet potatoes are stored in temperature and humidity-controlled warehouses that extend their shelf life for the entire year. So, the "season" for fresh yams is 12 months. Canned yams also are available year-round.

Here's some great information about the health benefits of sweet potatoes and how to select, store and prepare them:

* Orange, leafy green, and red fruits and veggies such sweet potatoes are full of beta-carotene/vitamin A, which regulates cell production and turnover (replacing old cells with new ones) so your skin's surface is smooth.

* The Center for Science in the Public Interest ranks the sweet potato at 184 in nutritional value, more than 100 points ahead of the baked Idaho potato, spinach or broccoli.

* Sweet potatoes provide twice the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A and more than one-third of the daily requirements of vitamin C.

* Sweet potatoes are an important source of betacarotene, vitamin B-6, iron, potassium and fiber. Sweet potatoes that are a pretty, bright orange color are richest in beta-carotene.

* Studies have consistently shown that a high intake of beta carotene-rich vegetables and fruits, like sweet potatoes, can significantly reduce the risks for certain types of cancer.

* Sweet potatoes contain virtually no fat or sodium. * When selecting fresh sweet potatoes, choose those

that are smooth, plump, dry and clean.

* Sweet potatoes should not be refrigerated unless cooked. Store at 55 to 65 degrees F.

* Always use a stainless-steel knife when cutting a sweet potato. A carbon blade will cause them to darken.

* One cup of canned sweet potatoes equals one medium-sized, cooked fresh sweet potato.

* When using canned yams, add them at the end of the recipe because they are already pre-cooked.



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This recipe for Vietnamese Sweet Potato and Pork Soup showcases the flavors of the sweet potato in a spicy, coconut milk broth.

Vietnamese Sweet Potato and Pork Soup 1 tablespoon canola oil 1 pound ground pork 1 small onion, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup) 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil, divided 1 (3-inch) piece lemongrass or zest of 1 lemon 3 cloves garlic, minced 1 small jalapeno pepper, seeds and ribs removed, if desired, chopped 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger 2 teaspoons ground cumin 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cardamom 1 teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon ground black pepper 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)

1 quart chicken stock

1 (13.5-ounce) can light coconut milk

1 tablespoon soy sauce

Garnish: chopped fresh cilantro, basil or jalapeno pepper slices

1. In a large stockpot, heat oil over medium heat. Add pork, onion, 2 tablespoons basil, lemongrass or lemon zest, garlic, jalapeno, ginger, cumin, cardamom, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Cook until pork is browned and onion is soft, about 10 minutes.

2. Add the sweet potatoes, chicken stock and coconut milk. Bring to a boil and then lower heat to a simmer. Cover and cook until sweet potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Uncover, remove lemongrass (if used) and stir in the soy sauce. Garnish with remaining cilantro, basil and jalapeno, if desired. Serves 4.



Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her new cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is www.divapro.com. To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.