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EXTENSION

Apricot

A relative of the peach, the apricot is smaller and has a smooth, oval pit that falls out easily when the fruit is halved. The skin and flesh are a golden orange color.

**Apricots are fruit
which grow on trees.**

Apricots originated in China over 4,000 years ago.

Spanish explorers introduced apricots to the New World and they were planted at missions all over California. The first major production of apricots in America was in 1792 south of San Francisco, California.

**In the United States
95% of apricots grow in
the San Joaquin Valley
and other parts of
northern California.**

VARIETIES

There are many varieties of apricots raised in the United States. Some of the most common varieties are Patterson, Blenheim, Tiltons and Castlebrites. Apricot season is from late May through June.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Sodium free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of potassium

USES

Apricots are great to eat raw or dried, and are also terrific cooked. The nutrients are more concentrated in dried than fresh apricots — dried apricots also have a higher sugar content, which makes them more likely to stick to your teeth.

Some apricots are grown in Nebraska.



Funded in part by USDA's Food Stamp Program and EFNEP. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact: 1-800-430-3244.

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Banana

Bananas are a long, thick-skinned fruit. They have a peel which comes off easily. Bananas ripen after they have been picked. They are ripe when the skin is yellow and speckled with brown spots. Avoid bananas with brown spots that seem very soft.

Bananas are fruit which grow in hanging clusters on plants which look like — but are not — trees.

Bananas originally came from the Malaysian area in Southeast Asia.

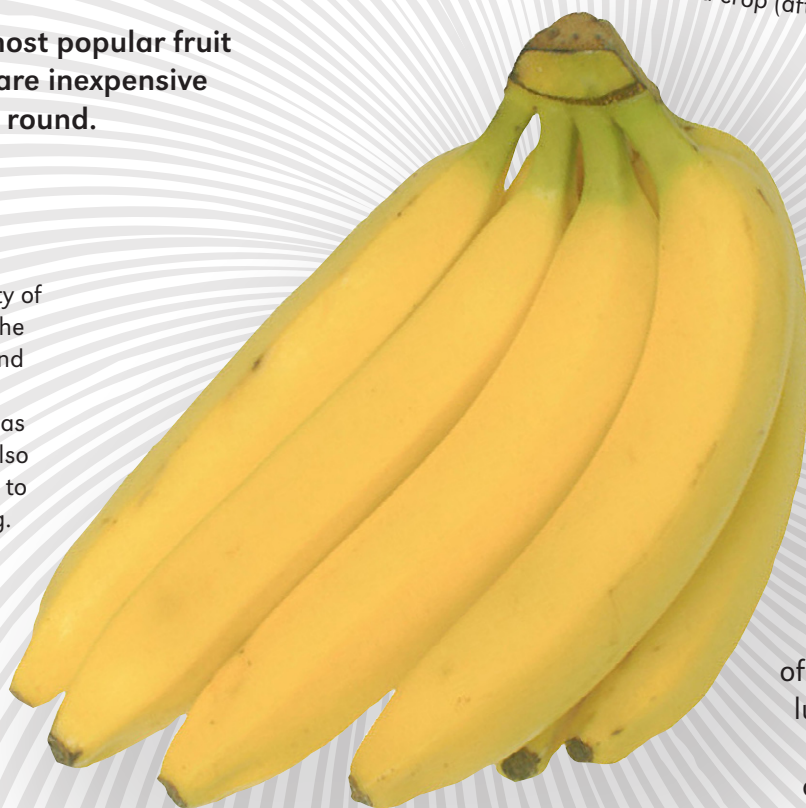
Grown in many tropical regions, bananas are the fourth most important food crop (after rice, wheat and corn).

Bananas are the most popular fruit in the world. They are inexpensive and available year round.

VARIETIES

The most popular variety of banana, Cavendish, is the familiar yellow type found in most grocery stores. Plantains, Finger Bananas and Red Bananas are also popular. Plantains need to be cooked before eating.

Although some wild varieties have hard seeds, almost all bananas people eat are seedless.



NUTRITION FACTS

- High calories
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A

USES

Bananas are delicious eaten after peeling off the skin. Enjoy a banana for lunch or as a snack. Eat sliced bananas in cereal, yogurt or on a peanut butter sandwich. Banana bread and muffins are very popular.

Bananas are not grown in Nebraska.



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Cantaloupe

In the United States, cantaloupe are commonly called muskmelon.

Muskmelon are round with a light-brown rind (thick skin) and orange flesh. The rind is not eaten. The center has seeds which need to be scooped out before eating.

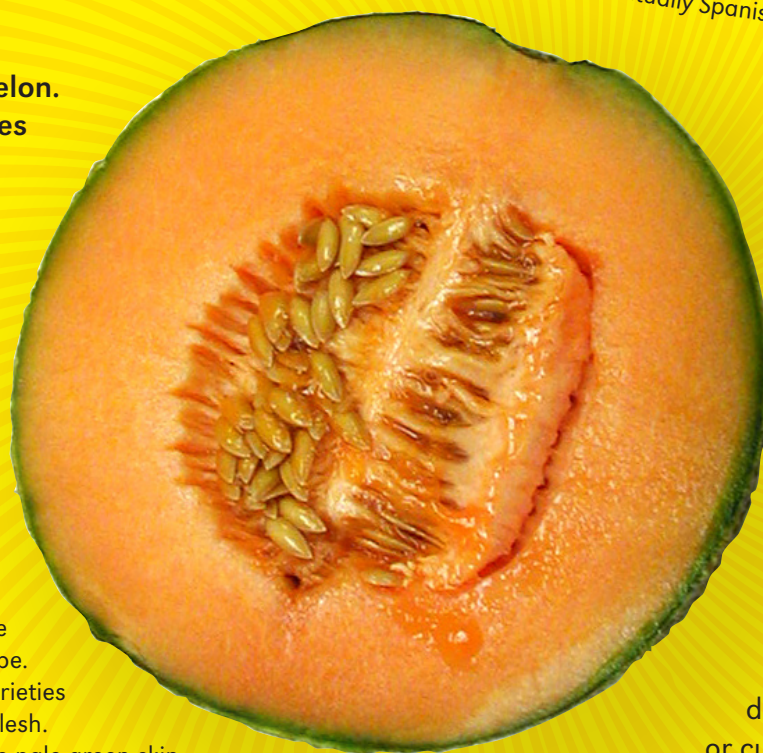
Cantaloupe are fruit which grow on vines.

Many melons originated in the Middle East. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupe.
Melon seeds were transported to North America by Christopher Columbus and eventually Spanish explorers grew them in California.

Cantaloupe are a melon. Other melons includes honeydew and watermelon. Melons are in the same gourd family as squash and cucumbers.

VARIETIES

In the United States, the most popular variety is the North American cantaloupe. There are less common varieties which have red or yellow flesh. European cantaloupe have pale green skin.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of potassium
- High in vitamin A

USES

Cantaloupe is delicious raw. It is usually sliced or cut into chunks. Add cantaloupe to fruit salads, fruit soups or salsa. Serve as a dessert with some ice cream and chocolate sauce.

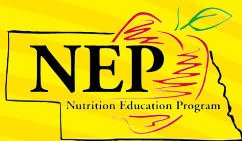
Many cantaloupe are grown in Nebraska.



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Carrots

Pick carrots which are a dark orange in color.
More beta-carotene is present in carrots
which have a dark orange color.

**Carrots are vegetables which
grow in the ground as taproots
(main roots of a plant).**

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan.
In Roman times, carrots were purple or white.
In the 16th century, Dutch growers bred the vegetable to grow in the colors of the House of Orange.

Over half of the carrots
grown in the United States
are grown in California.
Carrots are available
all year long.

VARIETIES

The variety of carrots usually
found in supermarkets is 7 to 9
inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches
in diameter. Baby carrots were
once longer carrots that have been
peeled, trimmed and packaged.
There are many other varieties of
carrots with colors including
white, yellow, red and purple.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Good source of fiber
- High in beta-carotene
- High in vitamin A

USES

Raw carrots make a
perfect snack. They can also be
cooked (steamed or microwaved).
Add carrots to salads, soups and
stews, or shred and bake them
into cakes or breads.

Many carrots are grown in Nebraska.





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Cauliflower

In its early stages, cauliflower looks like broccoli, which is its closest relative.

While broccoli opens outward to sprout bunches of green florets, cauliflower forms a compact head of undeveloped white flower buds.

Cauliflower are vegetables which grow as flowers on plants.

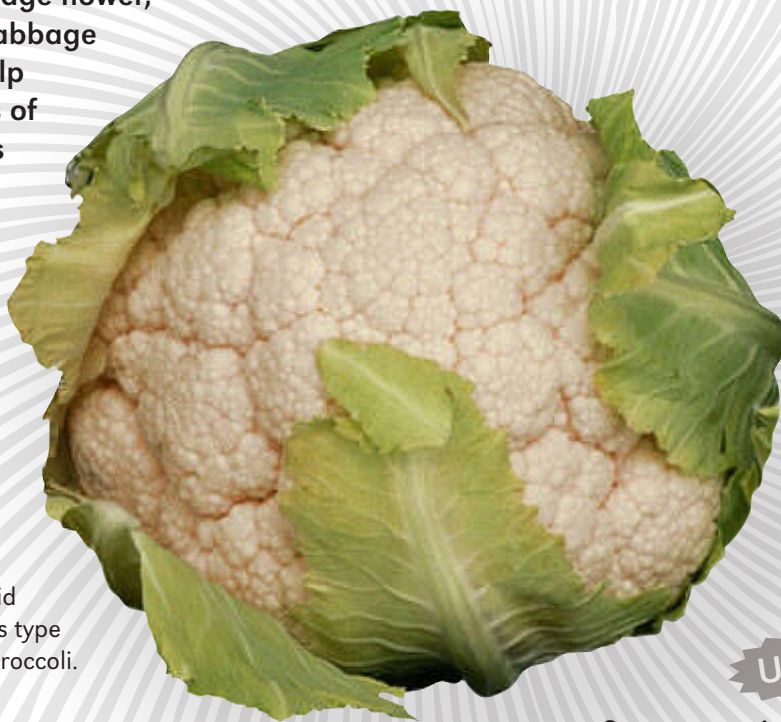
The cauliflower originated over 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean and Asia Minor region. Almost all cauliflower grown in the United States comes from California.

Cauliflower, or "cabbage flower," is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer. Cauliflower is available year round but is more plentiful in the fall.

VARIETIES

There are two types of cauliflower:

- creamy white — more popular in the United States
- cauliflower-broccoli hybrid — recently developed, this type of cauliflower looks like broccoli.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in folate
- High in fiber
- Good source of complex carbohydrates

USES

Cauliflower can be eaten raw or cooked.

Steam or microwave, instead of boiling, to better preserve its vitamin content.

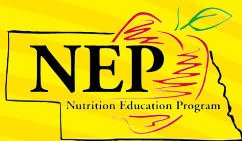
Many cauliflower are grown in Nebraska.



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Orange

The outer peel is usually a yellow orange color. Oranges range in size from small to large. The fruit inside is orange and made of several easily separated segments (usually about 10 segments). Do not eat the peel or seeds.

Oranges are fruit which grow on trees.

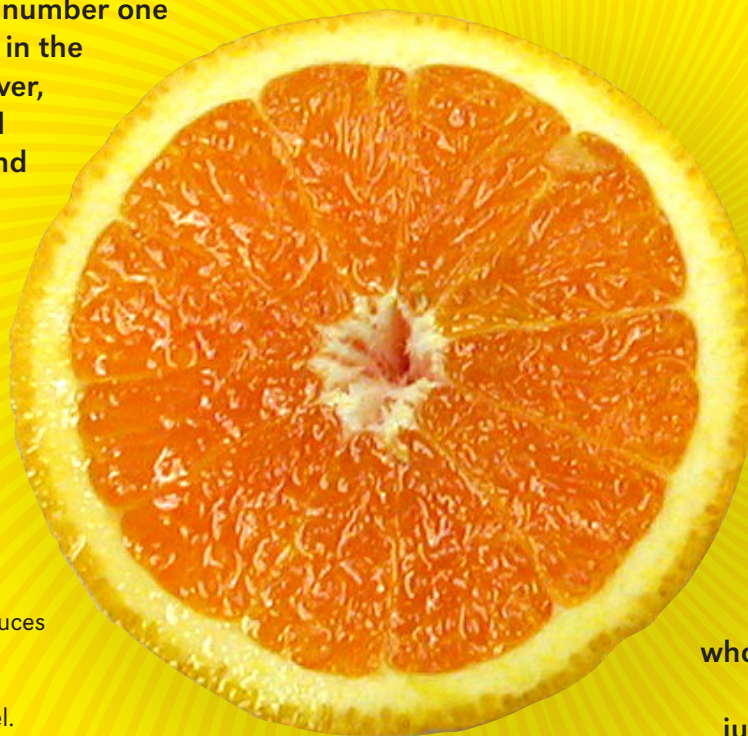
It is believed oranges originated in Southeast Asia.

Christopher Columbus and other explorers brought orange seeds and seedlings with them to North America. By the 1820's, there were orange groves growing in St. Augustine, Florida.

Oranges are a member of the citrus family. Florida is the number one producer of oranges in the United States. However, California, Texas and Arizona also grow and sell oranges. 90% of Florida's oranges go into juice.

VARIETIES

Varieties include the sweet orange, the sour orange and the mandarin orange (or tangerine). The United States mostly produces sweet orange varieties, including: Hamlin, Parson Brown, Valencia and Navel. Some oranges have seeds and some are seedless.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin
- High in folate, calcium, potassium, thiamin, niacin and magnesium

USES

Peel and eat as a whole fruit or add to fruit salads. Drink 100% juice or use the juice in dips, sauces, smoothies and baked goods.

Oranges are not grown in Nebraska.



Papaya

Papayas are similar to melons, but they are not in the melon family. The thin skin varies from green to orange to rose. The skin is not eaten. The flesh inside is yellow-orange. The center has seeds which are scooped out before eating.

Papayas are fruit which grow on plants which look like — but are not — trees.

It is believed papayas originated in southern Mexico and Central America.

Most of the papayas grown in the United States are grown in Hawaii. Some are also grown in Florida and California. Papayas are available year round.

VARIETIES

There are two types of papayas:

- Hawaiian — the Hawaiian varieties are found most often in grocery stores. They are pear shaped, weigh about 1 pound and have a yellow skin when ripe. The flesh is bright orange or pink depending on the variety.
- Mexican — the Mexican varieties are much larger. They can be more than 15 inches long and weigh up to 20 pounds.



NUTRITION FACTS

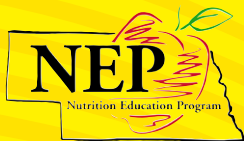
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Very high in vitamin C
- Good source of folate, potassium and fiber

USES

Papayas are usually eaten raw. They can be eaten plain or added to smoothies, salsa and fruit salads.

Papayas are not grown in Nebraska.





Peach

Peaches are about the size of a baseball. Their skin color is yellow or cream, sometimes blushed with red depending on the variety. The skin is slightly fuzzy. The flesh inside is usually yellow, but depending on the variety may also be white. An oval pit in the center needs to be removed before eating.

Peaches are fruit which grow on trees.

Peaches originally came from China and have been grown for thousands of years.
In the early 1600's, Spanish explorers brought the peach to the new world.

In the United States, most peaches are grown in California and the southern states. Georgia is known as the "Peach State." Peaches are available almost all year.

VARIETIES

There are two main types of varieties:

- Freestone — the flesh does not stick to the pit, so it is easy to remove the pit by hand. These varieties are usually sold fresh.
- Clingstone — the flesh "clings" or sticks to the pit. These varieties are usually used for canning.

Nectarines are a type of peach which have smooth skin without fuzz.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of vitamin C

USES

You can buy peaches fresh, canned or frozen. Peaches are usually enjoyed raw. Fresh peaches are a great snack. Add peaches to cereal, smoothies and fruit salads. Peaches can also be baked or grilled.

Some peaches are grown in Nebraska.





Pear

Pears come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. Skin colors include green, golden yellow and red. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Do not eat the seeds.

Pears are fruit
which grow on trees.

One of the world's oldest fruits, pears were known to both the Greeks and the Romans. Early colonists brought pears to the United States in the 1700's.

Pears are a relative of the apple. Pears rank second to the apple as the most popular fruit eaten in the United States. Washington, Oregon and California produce 97 percent of the pears in the United States.

VARIETIES

There are several varieties of pears including, Anjou, Bartlett, Bosc, Comice, Forelle and Seckel. Among these varieties there are only small differences in flavor and texture. Pears are available most of the year.

Choose pears with no bruises or dark brown spots. Wash under clean, running water before eating.

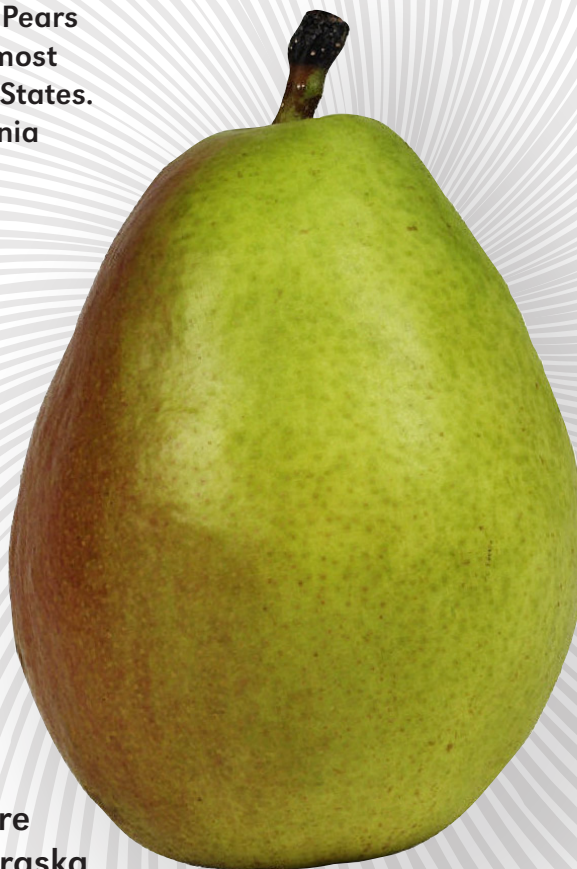
Many pears are
grown in Nebraska.

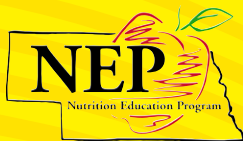
NUTRITION FACTS

- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in fiber
- High in potassium
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of fiber

USES

Pears can be eaten raw or cooked. They are great to eat as a quick snack. Chop and add to fruit salads. They can also be baked, broiled or grilled. Use pears where you would use apples.





Pineapple

The pineapple originated in southern Brazil and Paraguay.

Christopher Columbus may have carried it back to Spain.

The name pineapple in English (or piña in Spanish) comes from the similarity of the fruit to a pine cone. In the United States, most pineapples are grown in Hawaii.

VARIETIES

There are four varieties of pineapple found in grocery stores today. These include, the Gold, Smooth Cayenne, Red Spanish and Sugar-loaf. They are sold fresh or canned and all have a sweet flavor.

Pineapples are not grown in Nebraska.

Pineapples are oval shaped and up to 12 inches long. They weigh 1 to 10 pounds or more.

The tough rind (thick skin) may be dark green, yellow, orange-yellow or red. The flesh ranges from nearly white to yellow. The leafy top, rind – and usually the core – are cut off before eating.

Pineapples are fruit which grow on short-stemmed plants.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C

USES

Pineapple can be eaten raw or cooked. Add pineapple to fruit salad, salsa, pizza or stir-fries. It can also be grilled or broiled with meat.





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Potato

Most potatoes have a light brown or red skin with white flesh. Some of the new varieties have purple/blue skin with yellow flesh. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Cut off any green spots or sprouts.

Potatoes are vegetables which grow in the ground as tubers (fleshy, underground stems).

Potatoes were first grown in the Andes Mountain of South America over 7,000 years ago.
Spaniards brought potatoes to Spain in the 1500's, which then gradually spread to the rest of Europe.
Irish immigrants introduced potatoes to North America in the 18th century.

Potatoes are the second most popular vegetable in the world (after corn). They are inexpensive and available year round. Idaho grows 30% of the potatoes grown in the United States.

The potato has only a very distant relationship with the sweet potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have been often confused.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C

VARIETIES

There are thousands of varieties of potatoes. Common North American potato varieties include:

- Russet Burbank
- Yellow Finn
- Red Gold
- German Butterball
- Yukon Gold

USES

Potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked, microwaved, mashed, fried or grilled). Potatoes can be added to soups, stews or casseroles. Other popular ways to eat potatoes are: potato salad, hashbrowns, potato chips and French fries. *Potatoes prepared with little or no added fat are more nutritious.*

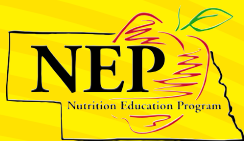
Many potatoes are grown in Nebraska.



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Squash

Squash come in many different colors, sizes and shapes. They have a rind (thick skin) which protects the fleshy part of the vegetable. The center has seeds which are usually scooped out before eating.

**Squash are vegetables.
Depending on the variety, they
either grow on vines or bushes.**

Squash originated in North America over 5,000 years ago.

It was one of the "three sisters" planted by Native Americans, along with maize (corn) and beans. Squash was grown and eaten by early Europeans that settled in America.

**Squash are in the same
gourd family as melons
and cucumbers.**

VARIETIES

Squash are commonly divided into two groups:

- Summer squash — the rinds are rich in beta-carotene and can be eaten. Zucchini is the most popular variety in the United States.
- Winter squash — usually have a hard rind which is not eaten. Some popular varieties are pumpkin, butternut, acorn and spaghetti squash.



NUTRITION FACTS

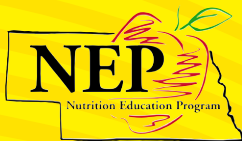
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in vitamin C

USES

Squash is often cooked, but some summer squash may be eaten raw (try with vegetable dip or add to salads). You may steam, sauté, grill or bake squash. Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Bake in breads, cakes and pies. Sometimes the seeds are eaten.

Many squash are grown in Nebraska.





Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes are usually the size of regular white potatoes. They are long and tapered. Sweet potatoes have smooth, thin skins which can be eaten.

Sweet potatoes are vegetables which grow in the ground as tuberous roots (fleshy, side roots).

Sweet potatoes originated in the tropical Americas at least 5,000 years ago. Christopher Columbus introduced sweet potatoes to Europe, and later explorers introduced them to Asia. China is now the world's largest grower of sweet potatoes.

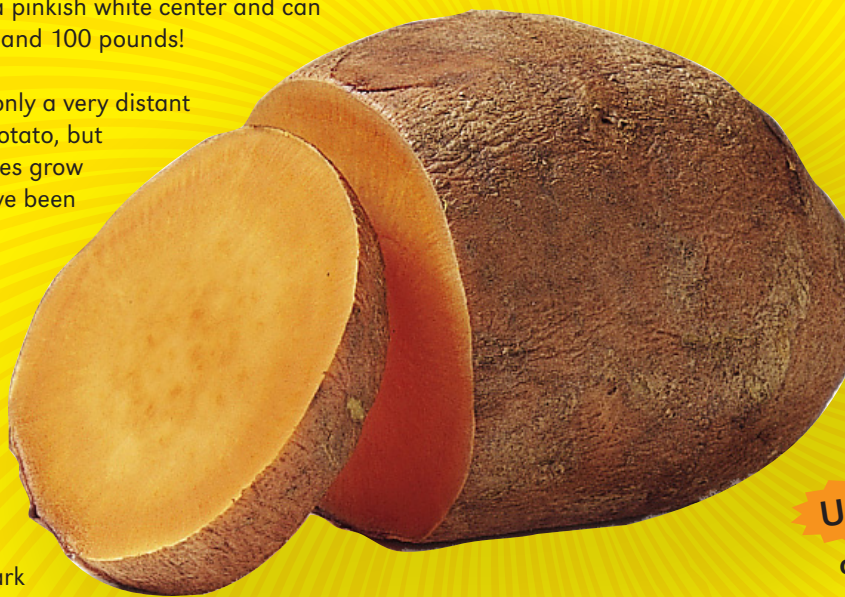
In the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams. True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia — they have a pinkish white center and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds!

The sweet potato has only a very distant relationship with the potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have been often confused.

VARIETIES

There are two varieties of sweet potatoes

- Pale yellow — with a dry, yellow flesh
- Dark orange — with a moist flesh. The dark orange is plumper in shape and somewhat sweeter than the pale yellow variety.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of calcium and potassium
- Excellent source of fiber

USES

Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked microwaved, mashed or fried). Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Sweet potatoes are popular at Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

Some sweet potatoes are grown in Nebraska.

