

SPOTLIGHT ON YAMS!

Yams or sweet potatoes have been grown in Louisiana since 1937. The most widely grown variety in Louisiana is the Beauregard and yams are grown in several Louisiana parishes.

Yams are naturally sweet and when cooked their sweetness intensifies. Yams are very low in calories, one medium baked sweet potato has about 120 calories. Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of Vitamin A and provide Vitamin C, Iron and B Vitamins which are all essential vitamins needed daily.

When purchasing yams, look for dry, clean yams that are heavy for their size. When storing yams, do not refrigerate them, but store them in a cool place with plenty of air circulation. You can freeze baked yams either in foil or in plastic freezer bags. All you have to do is reheat it and eat.

To bake a yam or sweet potato, wash it well and punch holes with a fork. Bake for 40 minutes at 400°F.

Yams are very versatile and can replace white potatoes in your favorite recipes. Yams can be prepared in a variety of ways. Try to enjoy some Louisiana yams in your favorite dishes.

Source: *LSU AgCenter*

HEALTHY HOLIDAY EATING

- Remember to exercise regularly, this will help offset the extra calories you will consume.
- Try not to over do your holiday eating.
- Try not to go to a party starving, you will end up eating more.
- Try not to skip any meals.
- Try to skim the fat off your gravies, stews, or soups, this can help reduce the calorie and fat content of them.
- Substitute high fat or full fat products in recipes with the reduced or fat-free versions.
- Try alternative seasonings, like herbs besides salt.
- Modify your favorite family recipes to be healthier or lower in calories.
- Try to serve or prepare dishes with fruits and vegetables as opposed to other dishes.
- Include more whole grains in your recipes/menus.
- Watch out on the alcoholic drinks, these can pack a calorie punch.
- Remember to read the food label on packages to make a healthy choice.

Use these tips to keep your holidays healthy. For more information on modifying recipes, contact our office for a copy of our pamphlet, "Modifying Recipes."

EXERCISING DURING COLD WEATHER

Winter time will be here before we know it. Shorter days, cooler temperatures and rain. Most of us will rather stay inside on the couch than going outside and exercising. Even though you would rather stay inside, we need to exercise even in cold weather. Exercise can help you burn calories, fight the winter blues, and help you build and strengthen muscles and bones. Use the following safety tips to help you exercise safely during the winter months.

- Take the extra time to warm up and cool down, especially in cooler temperatures. This will reduce the risk of pulled or strained muscles.
- Dress in layers and as you warm up you can remove your extra layers.
- Always wear a hat and/or gloves.
- Don't forget the sunscreen, even in the winter time you can still get UV ray exposure and sunburn.
- If you will do any outdoor sports, make sure the equipment is safe for use.
- Remember to wear light colored clothing or a reflective vest so others can see you when exercising early in the morning or in the evening.
- Stay hydrated. Remember to drink plenty of water before, during and after exercising to replace lost fluids and prevent dehydration. Even in the winter time you can get dehydrated.
- Be safe and smart. You know your bodies limitations, so listen to your body when its had enough.
- Stay safe and in shape this winter!

FREQUENTLY ASKED TURKEY QUESTIONS

1. How much turkey do I buy? It depends on what kind of bird you plan on cooking. The following chart can help you plan accordingly for your guests.

Size of Turkey	Amount Per Person
Whole bird	1 pound per person
Boneless turkey breast	½ pound per person
Turkey Rolls and Turkey Breast	¾ pound per person
Pre-stuffed frozen turkey	1¼ pounds per person (keep frozen until ready to cook)

2. How long will it take to thaw my turkey?
The rule of thumb is 24 hours per five pounds of turkey. So if you are planning to cook a turkey larger than 15 pounds, you'll need 3-5 days of defrosting time. The best and safest place for your turkey to defrost is in the refrigerator. Once your turkey is fully defrosted, keep it refrigerated for only 1-2 days.
3. How long should I cook my turkey?
Cooking time will depend on if your turkey is stuffed or unstuffed. One thing to remember is you should never cook your turkey lower than 325°F. The charts below give timetables for stuffed and unstuffed turkeys.

Unstuffed Turkeys	
Size of Turkey	Hours to Prepare
8-12 pounds	2¾ to 3 hours
12-14 pounds	3 to 3¾ hours
14-18 pounds	3¾ to 4¼ hours
18-20 pounds	4¼ to 4½ hours
20-24 pounds	4½ to 5 hours

Stuffed Turkeys	
Size of Turkey	Hours to Prepare
8-12 pounds	3 to 3½ hours
12-14 pounds	3½ to 4 hours
14-18 pounds	4 to 4¼ hours
18-20 pounds	4¼ to 4¾ hours
20-24 pounds	4¾ to 5¼ hours

4. How do I know if my turkey is cooked?

The only way to safely know that your turkey is fully cooked is to use a meat thermometer. The meat thermometer should be inserted into the thickest part of the turkey or cut of meat. The turkey should reach 165°F or higher to be fully cooked. The temperature needs to be checked in several places to ensure an even doneness.

5. It's Thanksgiving Day and I have a question about preparation of my turkey, who can I call?

Several organizations run hotlines around the holidays. The USDA Food Safety Institutes Meat and Poultry Hotline is 1-888-674-6854. The Butterball Turkey Hotline is 1-800-288-8372 and the Reynolds Turkey Hotline is 1-800-745-4000.

THE HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY TEST

Many people think it's okay to practice certain behaviors with their foods during the holidays. Most people do not pass the food safety test. Take the quiz for yourself and check your answers.

You can use the information to help keep your family safe during the holidays. (Note: All questions are either True or False.)

1. Turkeys are safe when frozen for one year?
2. Since turkeys or ham are cooked for so long it's okay to let them sit on the counter all day?
3. You should always cool leftovers before putting them in the refrigerator?
4. It's safe to stuff the turkey the night before and cook it in a low heat oven all night long to help save time.
5. If there is not room in the refrigerator and it's cold outside, is it safe to leave the food in the garage or on the porch?
6. Is it safe to use an eggnog recipe that calls for raw eggs?
7. Can you thaw your turkey on the counter or kitchen sink?
8. Since holiday parties and buffets can go on for hours, care should be taken to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
9. Pumpkin pies should be refrigerated.
10. Perishable foods received from a mail order company are always safe to eat when they arrive.

Answers:

1. True. A whole turkey can be safely frozen for 12 months.
2. False. Perishable foods and all cooked foods should not sit out for longer than two hours.
3. False. Foods do not need to be completely cooled before the leftovers are put in the refrigerator. If you have a large quantity of hot food, put it in small, shallow containers and refrigerate.
4. False. For a safely cooked turkey, the oven should be set no lower than 325°F. Cook the turkey until the internal temperature in the thickest part reaches 165°F.
5. False. Keeping food outside is not safe because there is no guarantee that the temperature will stay cold enough to keep food safe.
6. False. It is not recommended that people consume raw eggs.
7. False. The best way to thaw a turkey is slowly and in the refrigerator. It takes about one day for every five pounds of meat.
8. True. If you are having a gathering lasting two hours or more, make sure hot foods stay hot and cold foods stay cold.
9. True. Pumpkin pie is considered a custard pie and must be refrigerated after baking.
10. False. Even though the company may be reputable, the food may have been mishandled in the shipping process.

For more information on any topic in this newsletter or any other topic please contact our office at :

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ORGANIC FOODS PROGRAM

What are organic foods? If you are wondering what are organic foods then you should attend the Organic Foods Educational Program. The program will be held on Monday, November 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the LSU AgCenter Office located at 1105 W. Port St. in Abbeville. Please call 898-4335 for more information or to register.

Next Issue Features:

Sensible New Years Resolutions, Healthy Foods to Eat, Exercise Recommendations, National Heart Month and Much More!!!

Kindest Regards,

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