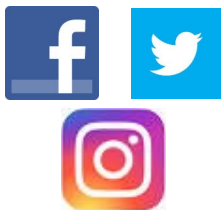


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### Now on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

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## Bon Appétit to a "Bacteria-free Buffet!"



**Hot foods on buffets can be kept hot in disposable aluminum trays with heating units underneath.** Photo: Canva.com

The holidays mean entertaining friends and family with food! Plan now to serve up platters of safely prepared and served food.

Use smaller serving dishes to replenish food more often. Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot so all can enjoy.

Warming trays, slow cookers, chaffing dishes and other gadgets can keep hot foods hot. Cold foods can be kept in the refrigerator until serving time or served on ice on the buffet.

Once a serving dish is almost empty, trade it for a fresh serving dish. Do not add new food to a used dish of food.

Keep an eye on the clock. Hot or cold perishable food should be used within two hours when left at room temperature.

Got leftovers? Refrigerate them within two hours. Divide large amounts of food into smaller containers to chill quickly.

Many family recipes may contain raw or lightly cooked eggs. It is risky to consume raw or undercooked eggs, especially for pregnant women, young kids, older adults and those with weakened immune systems. Be mindful about your friends and family by safely preparing foods such as eggnog, homemade Caesar salad dressing, ice cream or other recipes with raw eggs. Heating eggs to 160°F or using pasteurized eggs can keep away unwanted foodborne illness.

Learn more at [www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/serving-safe-buffets](http://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/serving-safe-buffets)

## You Asked It! Newsletter Changes

The You Asked It! newsletter has been a monthly publication since 2004. As 2024 marks the 20th anniversary of this newsletter, it's time for a new format!

Due to changes in other programs, this newsletter

will no longer be offered in PDF format.

Once I decide what format I will use, I will send out a notice and also put in on my website at [www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/index.html](http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/index.html).

This newsletter is based on timely information for each issue, new research, and information from questions received at the Rapid Response Center.

## Sweet Potatoes vs. Yams

No, they are not the same. In fact, you've probably never eaten an actual yam. Here's the difference.

Sweet potatoes are members of the morning glory family. Fresh sweet potatoes are harvested in the fall. They are sweeter than yams and more slender than a russet potato. Sweet potatoes are available in four colors:

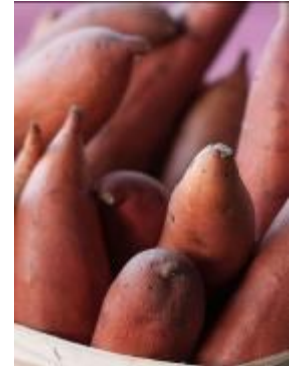
1. Rose-colored skin with orange flesh.
2. Pale copper-tan skin with white flesh.
3. Red skin with dry white flesh.
4. Purple skin and flesh.

Yams are related to lilies and are very starchy in texture. They are less sweet, larger and have a short shelf life. They look

more like logs with a thick skin. Yams must be cooked as they may contain toxins.

When the orange-fleshed sweet potato variety was brought to the U.S., they were referred to the African word "nyami," "njam," or "djambi" and labeled as yams.

Learn more from the [North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission](#).



**Sweet potatoes**  
Photo: USDA Flickr

**Horseradish can be dried. Clean and peel roots. Grate or slice into 1/4-inch pieces. No blanching is required. Spread on dehydrator trays in a single layer. Dry at 140°F for 6-10 hours until very brittle. Grind into a powder or leave as pieces. To use, mix with a little water before adding to recipes.**

## Preserving Horseradish

It's time to [harvest horseradish!](#)

So how can horseradish be preserved? There are no canning instructions, but it can be pickled and stored in the refrigerator. Vinegar helps to tame the strong flavor. The

National Center for Home Food Preservation has a recipe for [Pickled Horseradish Sauce](#). Remember, this is stored in the refrigerator only.

The heat and pungency in horseradish comes from the compound allyl

isothiocyanate, a mustard-like oil. Vinegar tames this compound, but timing matters! Waiting longer after grinding to add vinegar, the hotter it will be! Learn more from [Penn State Extension](#).

## Give the Gift of Food Mixes in a Jar

Sometimes a meal in a jar can make life easier! Giving the gift of food mixes in a jar can be budget friendly for the gift-giver and a time-saving blessing for the giftee!

[North Dakota State University Extension](#) has lots of ideas for any occasion. They can be added to gift baskets for a holiday auction. Recipes include a chili mix, cornbread mix, a cookie mix and a soup mix. The recipes for preparing the mixes are already in the publication, just cut and attach to the jar.

Another resource is from the [University of Maine Cooperative Extension](#). This publication includes soup mixes, muffin and cookie mixes, granola and more.



# Kitchen Gifts

GIVE A BUDGET-SAVING  
FOOD GIFT FROM YOUR  
KITCHEN!





## Brewing and Fermentation Science Short Course

The Brewing and Fermentation Science short course is a 3-day program held January 8-10, 2024, in which hobbyists, professional brewers, and other participants will have the opportunity to learn and experience the fundamentals in brewing science, brewing technology, safety, and sensory analysis. Participants will gain valuable industry insight from the professionals at Manhattan Brewing Company, as well as instruction from faculty at Kansas State University and other industry professionals on the brewing process and the science behind it.

The short course will be held at Manhattan Brewing Company's Taproom and Brewery in Manhattan, Kansas, where participants can get a hands-on experience and apply what they learn. The curriculum includes all facets of the brewing process including raw ingredients, brewing technology and techniques, fermentation, safety, packaging, and tasting of the finished product. This short course covers basics in brewing, cellaring, packaging, raw ingredients, safety practices, beer styles, and sensory analysis. 21+ to enroll.



### Information and registration

## 2024 Regional Farmers Market Workshops

We're back in person! Planning is taking place to have in-person Regional Farmers Market workshops in early 2024. Save the dates below for locations and plan to attend. More information will be coming soon and

will be available on the [Kansas Value Added Foods Lab](#) website.

Locations and dates include:

Olathe—February 9

Hutchinson—February 10

Parsons—February 23

Hays—March 1

Scott City—TBD

**These workshops are beneficial for anyone selling products direct to consumers, such as farmers markets, as well as market organizers.**



**Pop up timer in turkey**  
Photo: Canva.com

## Are "Pop Up" Timers Reliable?

Commonly used in turkeys and roasting chickens since 1965, the "pop-up" style disposable cooking device is constructed from a food grade nylon. The inside contains a stainless steel spring and organic firing material. The organic firing material is specifically designed to dissolve at specific predetermined temperatures. Once the firing material dissolves, the stainless steel spring releases the stem, allowing it to "pop up." This indicates that the food has reached the correct final temperature for safety and doneness.

Pop-up style disposable cooking devices are reliable to within 1 to 2 °F, however, proper placement is important. Checking with a conventional food thermometer is always recommended as an added precaution for properly gauging both safety and doneness. For all forms of poultry, including ground, pieces, and whole birds, a food thermometer should reach a minimum of 165°F.

Source: [www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/kitchen-thermometers](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/kitchen-thermometers)

Kansas State  
University  
Research & Extension

Rapid Response Center  
1530 Mid Campus Drive North  
221 Call Hall  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506

Phone: 785-532-1673  
Fax: 785-532-3295  
Email: [kblakesl@ksu.edu](mailto:kblakesl@ksu.edu)

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## It's Cranberry Season!



**Cranberries are a wetland fruit and grown in bogs.**

Photo: Canva.com

Are you still wanting to do some canning? This time of year, cranberries are in season. So here are some recipes from the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) to preserve cranberries for your own use, or for gift giving.

The berries should be brightly colored: fully red or yellowish-red with a smooth, glossy and firm skin. Shriveled, soft, wrinkled ber-

ries or those with surface blemishes should be discarded. Berries can be stored in the original packaging in the refrigerator crisper for up to 4 weeks. Cranberries can also be stored frozen for up to one year. To use after freezing, rinse in cold water and drain well.

- [Cranberry Marmalade](#)
- [Cranberry Conserve](#)
- [Cranberry Orange Chutney](#)
- [Cranberry Sauce](#)
- [Spicy Cranberry Salsa](#)
- [Cranberries](#)
- [Dehydrating Cranberries and Fruit Leather](#)
- [Freezing Cranberries](#)



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



On the Web at  
[www.rrc.ksu.edu](http://www.rrc.ksu.edu)



## Cost of Thanksgiving Meal

The cost of a festive holiday meal will be a little easier on your wallet in 2023. According to the [American Farm](#)



**Happy Holidays!**  
Photo: Canva.com

[Bureau Federation](#), the cost of the classic Thanksgiving meal for 10 people will be \$61.17. This is a 4.5% reduction from

2022. The driving factor is the decline in price of turkey. For the Midwest region of the U.S., the average cost is \$58.66.

Turkey accounts for 43% of the price of a Thanksgiving dinner. The decrease in cost is likely due to a decrease in avian influenza and the recovery in numbers of turkey flocks. The prices have also decreased for several other popular foods served on Thanksgiving menus.