

# **SWEET POTATO JUICE BLENDS**

## HEALTH AND MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES



Carolina Innovative  
Food Ingredients, Inc.





## Sweet Potato Juice Blends: Health and Marketing Opportunities

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Vegetable juices are growing in popularity, as consumers seek healthier beverage alternatives and a convenient alternative to labor-intensive home juicing.

A recently launched line of juices under the V8 brand brings vegetable juice blends into a popular, widely accessible format, with four new juices including a green juice and several based on root vegetables. This product launch by the leading brand in the juice industry shows that vegetable juices are no longer the preserve of foodies and dieters—they have reached the mainstream as people seek alternative ways of consuming vegetables.

90 percent of consumers view sweet potatoes as a healthy food, and more than 60 percent view products containing sweet potatoes as more valuable than comparable products due to added nutritional content. At the same time, less than 10 percent of consumers surveyed were aware that they had consumed sweet potato juice in a beverage, and only 22 percent were aware of products containing sweet potato juice.

According to Mintel, vegetable juice currently makes up only about 5 percent of the American juice market, but whereas other areas of that market are flat or declining, vegetable juice is growing fast.<sup>1</sup> Health-conscious consumers demand new products with functional benefits, and IBISWorld projects that their interest will drive growth in the industry over the next five years, particularly for more healthy, premium beverages, and for children's products that "hide" vegetable servings in a child-friendly product.<sup>2</sup>

Sweet potato juice offers a compelling option as the foundation for a more nutritional beverage with a premium profile. A recent study by North Carolina State University found that more than



Another recent study by BNP Media's Market Research Division examined which functional ingredients are important to manufacturers developing foods, beverages, and/or dietary supplements (*see chart on pg. 2*). **Sweet potato juice meets each of the top three criteria for a sought-after ingredient: gluten-free, functional sweeteners, and non-GMO.**

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<sup>1</sup> "Juice, Juice Drinks and Smoothies – US," November 2014

<sup>2</sup> IBISWorld Industry Report 31211c, "Juice Production in the US," October 2014

## Sought-after Qualities in Vegetable Ingredients

INGREDIENT CHARACTERISTIC	PERCENT OF DEVELOPERS WHO FIND IT IMPORTANT
GLUTEN-FREE	66%
FUNCTIONAL SWEETENER	64%
NON-GMO	64%
WHOLE GRAINS/SEEDS	62%
FRUIT/VEGETABLE EXTRACTS/POWDERS	58%
SOURCE: BNP MEDIA, INC. MARKET RESEARCH DIVISION	

Based on these findings, the market for products containing sweet potato juice is promising. Consumers perceive sweet potatoes well but have limited opportunities to consume them in beverages or other processed foods. In addition, sweet potatoes align nicely with emerging trends in the juice market as a whole.



Key to any successful launch of a sweet potato juice product will be finding the right blend of juices to maximize consumer appeal for health and sensory attributes. A recent paper in the *International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition Engineering* by three researchers from

Hawassa University analyzes the nutritional and sensory qualities of juice blends made with sweet potato and mango juice, as well as ginger.<sup>3</sup> The study examines the following juice blends:

- 100% sweet potato juice
- 99% sweet potato with 1% ginger
- 90% sweet potato with 10% mango
- 89% sweet potato with 10% mango and 1% ginger
- 80% sweet potato with 20% mango
- 79% sweet potato with 20% mango and 1% ginger

All the products tested were found to have good nutritional content, including beta-carotene and vitamin C, and highly bioavailable zinc and iron. Blends with a higher concentration of sweet potato juice were notable for enhanced beta-carotene. At the same time, blends containing mango and ginger had the highest sensory scores, averaging very good ratings (generally a 4 out of 5) for taste, appearance, and mouthfeel.

<sup>3</sup> "Tariku Zena Mamo, Abadi Gebre Mezgebe, and Abebe Haile, "Development of Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) Juice: Analysis of Physico-Chemical, Nutritional and Sensory Property," *International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition Engineering* 4(5): 128-137.



In a juice application, sweet potato juice contributes these nutritional and sensory benefits, in addition to serving as a natural source of sweetness. Sweet potato juice can serve as a clean label alternative to traditional sweeteners like high fructose corn syrup or sucrose, offering a more appealing flavor profile without health concerns. Furthermore, as a non-GMO, paleo-friendly ingredient, sweet potato aligns with many of today's consumer food trends.

Sweet potato juice thus has a promising future in healthy, appealing juice blends. While it has the best sensory qualities if combined with other ingredients, it adds a strong nutritional profile

and serves as an excellent base for new, unique flavors. This ingredient had been available only as a commodity imported from foreign markets, but with the founding of Carolina Innovative Food Ingredients (CIFI) the food industry now has a high quality, American supplier for this healthy food ingredient. CIFI sources and processes all of our sweet potatoes wholly in North Carolina, the home of the majority of the American sweet potato crop. Our ingredients are traceable to the farm, supporting a shorter, more transparent supply chain. As you consider adding the health and marketing benefits of sweet potato juice for your applications, look to CIFI as your partner for high-quality, domestic ingredients.

