

A Treat for Zeke the Shepard

By Joseph Parish



Cooking in the kitchen is not merely to provide food for other humans, but can also apply to your pets as well. Do you want to put a happy face on your favorite canine pet? If so, follow these simple instructions and make your dog some fancy, homemade sweet potato treats. You will be glad you did and I can just about guarantee that your pet will also.

The other day while shopping at Produce Junction in Dover, I encountered a good deal on the purchase of Sweet Potatoes. If memory serves me correct, I believe they cost approximately two to three dollars for several pounds. It was then that I recalled that the dogs enjoyed dehydrated sweet potatoes. It was about to become Zeke the dog's best day ever. Dogs tend to enjoy sweet foods; however, it is not desirable to give these types of food to your canine pet.

In place of normal sugar loaded treats I decided to make Zeke some fancy dog treats from the sweet potatoes. These treats can provide your favorite pet with the sweets it desires as well as something for them to chew on. These veggies represent a nutritious option for your pet. Sweet potato treats are high in fiber, providing a great benefit to your dog's digestion, as well as aiding in lower glucose levels. These root vegetables act to boost your canine friend's immune system, reduce inflammation, and improve their eyes. They act as an antioxidant and supply him or her with needed vitamin A, B6, C, E, beta-

carotene, calcium, copper, folate, iron, manganese, potassium, and thiamine. Best of all they are easy to make and are less expensive than commercially purchased dog treats.

To start out, I took several very firm, sweet potatoes and cleaned them well in cool tap water. I ensured that any eyes and green spots were completely removed. You can peel them if you so desire, however, it is not a requirement. They were much too hard to slice properly with the mandolin so I place them in the microwave for a few minutes to soften them slightly. Unfortunately, after five minutes I did not think they were soft enough to slice with the mandolin so I put them in for another five. That my friend, was a big mistake. Five minutes should be sufficient for them otherwise they are too soft and become difficult to slice. Alternatively, you could serve the sweet potatoes to your dog either cooked or mashed but be sure not to include any butter or salt. The rule here is no additives.

I eventually got my two sweet potatoes, sliced and they were ready for the dehydrator. Using a sharp knife, I sliced the potatoes into quarter-inch thick pieces. You can slice the potatoes either lengthwise as long slices or crosswise as you wish. The dogs are not particular and love them either way. A touch of parsley can add a new dimension of taste for your pet. The thicker the slices, the chewer it will be. Set your dehydrating machine to 135 F. Place your potatoes on the rack and dehydrate for 6 to 14 hours.



Although I used our dehydrator to make these treats, you could use the oven as well. Simply, preheat oven to approximately 250 F. Using a cookie sheet lined with a piece of parchment paper, place the sliced potato pieces on the sheet. You can put the slices close to each other, but they should not touch. Dehydrate in the oven for three hours.

When completed put the treats into an airtight container and place them in your refrigerator. That is if they last at all. Zeke knows where they come from and patiently waits for another treat. These treats will last for about a week in the refrigerator and if put in a freezer, they could last for up to six months.

