

In the Kitchen



Notes from the Underground: Root Vegetables

Root vegetables can be intimidating. They have thick, strange looking skin and long green stems with leaves sprouting out of them. It's a relief to know that root vegetables are some of the most nutrient-dense vegetables in the world. While each root vegetable contains its own unique set of health benefits, they share many of the same characteristics.

Beets, carrots, potatoes and onions are probably the most familiar root vegetables. Let's take a look at some of the lesser known root vegetables such as turnips parsnips and rutabagas. Parsnips look like white carrots. Turnips resemble giant radishes with a cabbage flavor. Rutabagas are larger than turnips with yellow skin and flesh.

Root vegetables are packed with high concentration of antioxidants, Vitamins C, B and A, and iron. They are also filled with slow burning carbohydrates and fiber, which make you feel full, and help regulate blood sugar and the digestive system.

Roots vegetables are easy to prepare. They can be served steamed/boiled which is a great way of prepping the vegetables to be mashed or pureed. Roasting any vegetable cultivates flavor and texture. Sautéing root vegetables or including them in a stir-fry recipe is an easy cooking method. Root vegetables can also easily be grilled.

The next time you are in the produce section at the grocery store or at your local farmers' market, be sure to look for the many varieties of root vegetables. Maybe a few will find their way home with you.

Recipe:

Sautéed Turnips with Spinach and Raisins

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
3 medium turnips, peeled and cut into matchsticks
½ cup raisins
3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
10 oz. fresh spinach, coarsely chopped
Freshly ground nutmeg
Salt and pepper

Directions:

In a sauté pan, heat the oil with garlic. Add the turnip and raisins and cook for about 1 minute. Add the lemon juice, cover and cook for 3 more minutes. Stir in the spinach and cook just until wilted. Sprinkle with nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste.

