

Winter Root Vegetables

Parsnips

The parsnip has endured for centuries, and the variety we are familiar with today was developed in the Middle Ages where mothers used parsnips for weaning babies. Europeans brought the parsnip to the United States in the early 1600s, but this creamy-white root has never become an American favorite. Now these old-fashioned vegetables have gained renewed favor because they're a good source of complex carbohydrates and contain little fat and no cholesterol. Parsnips can be described as off-white carrot. Before the introduction of the potato, parsnips, like turnips, were an important staple food. Fresh parsnips are available year-round with the peak times being fall and winter. Selection and storage: Look for small to medium, well-shaped parsnips; larger ones can be woody inside. Avoid limp or shriveled parsnips and ones with bruises or cuts. Parsnips can be refrigerated in a plastic bag for up to two weeks. But don't store them near apples, pears and other fruits because the ethylene gas produced from these fruits can make parsnips bitter. Parsnips have a sweet flavor and can be used just as you would use carrots.

Turnips

The white-fleshed turnip has a white skin with a purple-tinged top. The so-called yellow turnip is actually a turnip relative, the RUTABAGA. Small, young turnips have a delicate, slightly sweet taste. As they age, however, their taste becomes stronger and their texture coarser, sometimes almost woody. Fresh turnips are available year-round, with the peak season from October through February. Choose heavy-for-their-size small turnips, as they are the youngsters and will be more delicately flavored and textured. The roots should be firm and the greens (if attached) bright-colored and fresh-looking. Though turnips can be refrigerated, tightly wrapped, for 2 weeks, they do best in a cool (55°F), well-ventilated area.

Rutabagas

Rutabagas are often called yellow turnips, and are thought to have evolved from a cross between a wild cabbage and a turnip. The earliest records of rutabaga's existence are from the seventeenth century in Southern Europe. Because rutabagas thrive best in colder climates, they became popular in Scandinavia, but especially in Sweden. In Europe, rutabagas are called swedes. The rutabaga

is a root vegetable that looks very much like a turnip with yellow-orange flesh. It's a great tasting vegetable with a delicate sweetness and flavor that hints of the light freshness of cabbage and turnip. With its easy preparation and versatility, great nutrition, and excellent flavor, the rutabaga can easily become a family favorite. Because rutabagas store so well, up to one month in the refrigerator and up to four months in commercial storage at 32°F.

How to Prepare and Serve Root Vegetables

Use a vegetable peeler to peel the roots, and then cut into Winter roots are very firm so use a heavy, sharp knife. Place the root on a folded kitchen towel on a cutting board to keep it from slipping around, cut into 1 inch cubes. The simplest way to serve these vegetables is to cook and then mash with a little butter, and salt and pepper to taste, just like mashed potatoes. Toddlers and children will especially like parsnips because they are slightly sweet in taste. In addition to using as a side dish, add one of more of these vegetables to soups and stews. They can also be mixed together or with potatoes and mashed.

Miss Vickie's Pressure Cooker Recipes

Pressure Cooking Time Tables

Turnips, small, quartered	3 minutes at 15psi	1/2 cup cooking liquid
Turnips, large (older) 1 -inch chunks	5 minutes at 15psi	1/2 cup cooking liquid
Parsnips, 1-inch chunks	3 minutes at 15psi	1/2 cup cooking liquid
Rutabaga, 1-inch chunks	4 minutes at 15psi	3/4 cup cooking liquid

BRAISED OXTAILS WITH RUTABAGAS

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 lbs oxtails, trimmed
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 large onion, chopped
pinch dried hot red pepper flakes
3 cups beef broth
1/4 cup soy sauce
3 tablespoons Scotch whiskey
5 (4- by 1-inch) strips of fresh orange zest, removed with a vegetable peeler
1 star anise
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 lbs rutabaga, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed
3 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)
In a large cooker, heat the oil over moderately high heat. Wash and trim the oxtails, pat dry and seasoned with salt and pepper. Brown the oxtails in batches, transferring them as they are browned with tongs to a bowl. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of the fat, add the garlic and the red pepper flakes, and cook the mixture, stirring, for 30 seconds. Return the oxtails to the cooker. Add the broth, onions, 2 cups water, soy sauce, Scotch, zest, star anise, sugar, and the salt. Lock the lid in place and bring to pressure. Cook 55 minutes and use the cold or quick release to drop the pressure. Add the rutabagas and return to pressure. Cook 4 minutes and use the cold or quick release to drop the pressure. Skim any fat from the cooking liquid and bring the mixture to a simmer. Stir the cornstarch in 1/e cup cold water and add to soup, simmering as it thickens. Transfer the mixture to a large serving dish or tureen and sprinkle with the coriander.

SWEET GLAZED TURNIPS

1 medium turnips; cubed
1 dozen dried apricots
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoon butter or margarine
Boil 1/2 cup water in the pressure cooker, add apricots and remove from heat to soak for 1 hour. Add turnips to the cooker. Lock the lid in place and cook at 15 lbs. pressure for 3 minutes. Use cold water release.. Drain well. Add sugar and butter and heat over low flame until sugar is dissolved. Return turnips to the cooker and continue cooking, stirring gently and often until glazed.

CREAM OF PARSNIP SOUP WITH CRAB MEAT

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 cups minced onions
salt and pepper
3 lbs. parsnips, peeled and diced (about 1/2 inch)
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
8 cups chicken stock
1/2 to 1 cup heavy cream
1 lb of cooked crab meat, cut into 2 inch pieces
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh parsley
In a large cooker, heat the oil. Saute the onions until wilted. Add stock and bring to a boil. Add parsnips, salt and pepper. Lock the lid in place and bring to pressure. Cook 5 minutes and use the cold or quick release to drop the pressure. Using a blender, puree the soup until smooth and return to the cooker. Add the cooked crab meat. Bring to a simmer and slowly stir in the cream. Adjust seasoning if needed. Ladle the soup into individual bowls. Garnish with parsley. Serve warm.