

Rutabaga

Volume 1, Issue 8



<http://panen.psu.edu>

panen@pahunger.org

(717) 233-1791



What's So Great about Rutabaga?

Why is Potassium Important?

Eating a diet rich in potassium and lower in sodium is good for your health. Potassium is an electrolyte that helps keep body functions normal. It may also help protect against high blood pressure.

Potassium is found in fruits and vegetables. Root vegetables like rutabagas are good sources of potassium.

Most adults get adequate amounts of potassium in their diet. To be sure you are eating enough, go to www.MyPyramid.gov to see how many fruits and vegetables you need each day.

Although sources of potassium, consult your health care provider before using supplements and salt substitutes.

Rutabagas are an excellent source of vitamin C, and a good source of potassium, fiber and vitamin A.

Rutabagas are low in calories and are fat free.

Rutabaga's sweet, mildly peppery flesh makes great side dishes.

Rutabagas are tasty in salads, soups, and stews.

Rutabagas are inexpensive.

Selecting and Storing Rutabaga

Rutabagas are available all year. But these root vegetables are best in the fall. Rutabagas are often trimmed of taproots and tops. When found in the grocery store, they are coated with clear wax to prevent moisture loss.



Look for

Firm, smooth vegetables with a round, oval shape. Rutabagas should feel heavy for their size.

Avoid

Avoid rutabagas with punctures, deep cuts, cracks, or decay.

Storage

Rutabagas keep well. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for two weeks or more. If stored at room temperature, rutabagas will last a week.

Varieties of Rutabaga

Rutabagas are relatives of turnips. Rutabagas are larger, denser and sweeter than turnips. Smaller rutabagas tend to be sweeter than larger rutabagas. Rutabagas have a lumpy, irregular shape with tan skin, and a dark purple band at the crown.

Common types grown in Pennsylvania include American Purple Top, Laurentian, and Joan.



A turnip is pictured on the left. A rutabaga is on the right. Notice the difference in size, texture, and color.

Preparation Tips

Did You Know?

Rutabaga's name comes from the Swedish word *rotabagge*, meaning "round root."

Rutabagas are thought to be a mix of turnips and wild cabbage.

Rutabagas are members of the cabbage family called "cruciferous vegetables". These vegetables (like broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts) have nutrients that may be cancer-fighting and good for your health.



A rutabaga cut in half

Rutabagas can be eaten raw, but large ones may be strongly flavored. Place rutabagas in boiling water for about five minutes before baking, braising, or stir-frying. To keep a mild flavor, be careful not to overcook. Rutabagas mix well with other root vegetables. Mix with carrots, potatoes, and turnips to make a healthy vegetable stew.

The wax and skin of rutabagas must be peeled before cooking. A sharp paring knife is better than a vegetable peeler. Quarter rutabagas for easier peeling.

Baking/roasting: Place ¼ inch-thick slices of rutabaga in a shallow baking dish. Sprinkle with a few tablespoons of water. Cover and bake in a 350°F oven until tender. Sliced onions can be layered with the rutabagas for additional flavor. Quartered rutabagas can be roasted alongside meat or poultry. Cooking time is 50 to 60 minutes.



Stir-frying: Stir-fry thinly sliced rutabagas until they begin to crisp. Cooking time is 6 to 7 minutes.



Boiling: Drop whole or sliced rutabagas in a pot of boiling water. Cover and cook until just tender. Uncover pot during cooking to allow gases to escape. This makes the rutabagas have a better flavor. Cooking time for whole rutabagas is 25 to 35 minutes. Cooking time for sliced ones is 7 to 10 minutes.

Braising: Place sliced or cubed rutabagas in a heavy skillet. Add enough broth to cover the bottom of the pan. Cover and simmer until tender. Cooking time is 15 to 20 minutes.

Steaming: Place diced rutabagas in a metal colander or basket over a pot of water. Cover and steam until just tender. Cooking time is 25 to 35 minutes.



Microwaving: Place a pound of cubed rutabagas in a microwaveable baking dish. Add 3 tablespoons of liquid. Cover, and cook until tender. Stir halfway through cooking time. Let the rutabagas stand three minutes after removing them from the microwave. Cooking time is 7 to 9 minutes.

Nutrient Data

1 cup cooked Rutabaga

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup, cubes (170g)	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 66	Calories from Fat 3
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 34mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 10g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 53%
Calcium 8%	Iron 5%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
NutritionData.com	

Key nutrient facts are circled in purple.

Fitting Rutabagas into MyPyramid



The **green** triangle of MyPyramid is the vegetable section. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, or canned. Age, gender, and level of physical activity determine the daily vegetable need. For a 2000 calorie diet, it is recommended having about 2 ½ cups of vegetables daily. For more information on vegetable serving sizes go to www.mypyramid.gov.

What does a cup of vegetables look like?

It can be hard to know what a serving size looks like. There are some tools that can help.

1 cup of vegetables is about the size of a baseball, or the size of your fist.



Recipe Collection

Nutrient Data

½ cup Harvest Salad

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (150g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 35
<hr/>	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3.5g	5%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 55mg	2%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 6g	
Protein 2g	
<hr/>	
Vitamin A 120%	Vitamin C 45%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%
<small>*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:</small>	
	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less Than 65g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less Than 300mg 300 mg
Sodium	Less Than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
<small>Calories per gram:</small>	
	Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Harvest Salad

Serves 4

Ingredients

Salad

- 2 cups washed romaine lettuce
- 1 cup washed cilantro leaves
- 1 cup parsnips
- 1 cup carrots
- 1 cup rutabaga

Dressing

- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lime zest
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil

Instructions

1. Peel and dice the parsnips, carrots, and rutabaga
2. Combine romaine lettuce and cilantro, and divide onto four plates.
3. Place parsnips, carrots and turnips into 1 quart of boiling water. Return water to a simmer, cook vegetables for 2 minutes. Strain into a colander.
4. Mix ingredients for the dressing right before use.
5. Place hot vegetables on top of greens and top with homemade dressing.

Estimated cost

Per Recipe: \$ 3.24

Per Serving: \$ 0.81

Nutrient Data

½ cup Roasted Rutabaga

Calories 102, Calories from fat 36, Total fat 4g, Saturated fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 75mg, Carbohydrate 17g, Dietary fiber 4g, Sugars 3g, Protein 2g

Roasted Rutabagas*

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 pound rutabagas
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and halved
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/3 cup low-fat, reduced sodium chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon crumbled dried rosemary
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Peel and cut rutabaga into ½ inch thick slices.
2. Steam the rutabagas over boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain.
3. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add rutabagas and sugar. Cook for 6 minutes.
4. Add broth, rosemary, salt and pepper. Cook for 10 minutes, uncovered until rutabagas are tender.

*Recipe adapted from www.diabetes.org

Did You Know?

The first record of rutabagas is from the seventeenth century. Rutabagas were used as both food and animal feed in southern Europe. In England, rutabagas were referred to as "turnip-rooted cabbages." Americans were growing rutabagas as early as 1800s.

Grow Your Own Rutabaga

For summer use, rutabagas should be planted as early in the spring as possible. For fall harvest, plant rutabagas about 100 days before the first frost.

Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep. Allow 12 to 24 inches between rows. Water as needed to establish the seedlings. Weed frequently.

Rutabagas are of best quality (mild and tender) when they are of medium size. Medium rutabagas are 3 to 5 inches in diameter.

Rutabagas survive until the fall frosts. The cool weather sweetens the plant.

For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension Educator in the phone book or at <http://www.extension.psu.edu/>



Directions: Answer the questions below to test how much you know about rutabagas.

Questions

1. **Rutabagas are sweeter than turnips**
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. **When boiling rutabagas, you should**
 - a. Keep the pot covered at all times
 - b. Allow the water to boil over the edge of the pot
 - c. Lift the lid occasionally to allow the gases to be released
3. **Rutabagas are an excellent source of vitamin C, and a good source of _____, fiber and vitamin A.**
 - a. Calcium
 - b. Potassium
 - c. Fat
4. **If stored in a cool, dry place rutabagas will stay fresh for**
 - a. 2 or more weeks
 - b. 2-3 days
 - c. 5 days
5. **Rutabagas are in the _____ family**
 - a. Citrus
 - b. Cruciferous vegetable
 - c. Squash



Answers

1. True; Rutabagas are often compared to turnips. But rutabagas have a sweeter flavor and are not as peppery. Rutabagas also have lower moisture content than turnips and so keep better.
2. C: Lift the lid to allow the gases to be released. The gases that are released have a bad smell. Releasing the gases cause the rutabagas to have a better flavor.
3. B: Rutabagas are a good source of potassium. Potassium is an electrolyte that helps keep body functions normal. It may also help protect against high blood pressure.
4. A: Rutabagas are hardy plants. They will stay fresh in a cool, dry place for well over 2 weeks.
5. B: A mix of turnip and wild cabbage, rutabagas are in the cruciferous vegetable family. Other vegetables in the cruciferous family are broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts. Cruciferous vegetables have nutrients that may be cancer-fighting and good for your health.

Rutabaga Coloring Activity

Directions: Rutabagas have dark purple color on their skin. Color the Rutabagas. Draw what you might think the inside of a rutabaga might look like.

