

Farm to School: Highlighting Local Fruits & Vegetables

Fruit & Vegetable facts

Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

— PARSNIPS —

The Parsnip is a root vegetable that is related to the carrot but is paler in color and has a sweeter taste. Although starchy like a potato, the parsnip is considered nutritionally superior.

HISTORY: Parsnips have been cultivated by humans for at least 2,000 years. They are native to Eurasia and were widely used by the Greeks and Romans. In ancient times, parsnips and carrots were often referred to by the same name. The Europeans brought parsnips to the United States in the 16th century, but to this day, they are not as popular with Americans as their carrot cousins. For centuries in Europe, parsnips were a ubiquitous and nutritious staple food. They were often used to sweeten dishes such as cakes and jams before sugar was widely available.



BOTANICAL FACTS: Parsnips are root vegetables which mean that the plant's underground roots are eaten as a vegetable. Parsnip falls under the sub category of taproot, an enlarged, straight to tapering plant root that grows vertically downward. The taproot forms a center from which other roots sprout laterally. Plants with taproots are difficult to transplant. Taproots develop a fibrous root system, which lacks a main downward-growing root. www.eattheseasons.co.uk/Archive/parsnips.htm

Underground Parts of the Plants We Eat

TYPE	FUNCTION	VARIETIES
Tubers	Swollen underground stems, capable of producing new plants and storing energy for the parent plant. The underground tubers can create new plants if the parent plant dies.	Potato, sunchoke, yam
Tap Roots	A primary root that grows vertically downward and gives off small lateral roots. Many taproots are food or water storage organs and are very long for reaching water deep in the ground.	Beet, carrot, cassava, jicama, parsnip, radish, rutabaga, turnip
Tuberous Roots	A thick and fleshy root like a tuber but without buds.	Sweet potato, yucca
Corms	A short, vertical, swollen underground plant stem that serves as a storage organ used by some plants to survive winter or other adverse conditions such as summer drought and heat.	Celeriac, eddo, taro, water chestnut
Rhizomes	A stem of a plant that is usually found underground, often sending out roots and shoots from its nodes. Rhizomes may also be referred to as creeping rootstalks or rootstocks.	Arrowroot, galangal, ginger, ginseng, lotus root, turmeric
Bulbs	A short stem with fleshy leaves or leaf bases. The leaves often function as food storage organs during dormancy.	Garlic, onion, shallot

For more information, visit: www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/specialty

Brought to you by VT FEED and VT Agency of Education. VT FEED is a partnership of Shelburne Farms and NOFA-VT. Funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant through VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets.

All FFVP materials available at:
vtfeed.org/feed-resource-library

More about.. PARSNIPS

More Facts



- Parsnips are available year-round with a peak period during fall and winter.
- Parsnips grow very well in cold climates.
- The first frost converts parsnip's starch to sugar giving it a pleasantly sweet flavor.
- Look for small to medium, well shaped roots; avoid limp, shriveled or spotted parsnips.
- Parsnips are best cooked as they tend to be very fibrous.
- To harvest a parsnip, pull it from the base of the leaves.



Cooking Parsnips

- Parsnips can be eaten raw grated into a salad, sliced, diced, or julienned.
- They should be washed, peeled, and trimmed before cooking.
- Cook only to the just tender point; avoid overcooking as sweetness will diminish.
- Roasting or steaming are the preferred methods of cooking.
- Steaming takes approximately 10-15 minutes, roasting about 30-40 minutes.
- Whole roast parsnips are delicious accompanied by yogurt or sour cream, flavored with garlic, lemon or coriander.
- Parsnips can be boiled and mashed as a delicious alternative to potatoes.
- Cut parsnips into thin strips and cook as French fries.

 See **RECIPES** section on our website for recipe ideas

Storage

- Store in a plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper at 32–35°F.
- The root will keep for four to five months.

Nutrition Facts

Parsnips are a great source of vitamin C, fiber, folate, and potassium. (Increased potassium in the diet is associated with a lowering in blood pressure.)

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 one 9" parsnip (80g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 60	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 14g	5%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	