



GET ROOTED!

root vegetables = exciting flavors + nutrients + convenience

So, what's a root vegetable?

When the underground part of the plant is eaten as a vegetable, it is called a "root vegetable" (even though sometimes it's really what botanists would call a tuber, bulb or other plant organ). They aren't always pretty (some are even downright ugly: jicama, anyone?) but they taste mmmm good! Common root veggies include:



Sweet Potatoes



Beets



Parsnips



Carrots



Jicama



Onions



Radishes



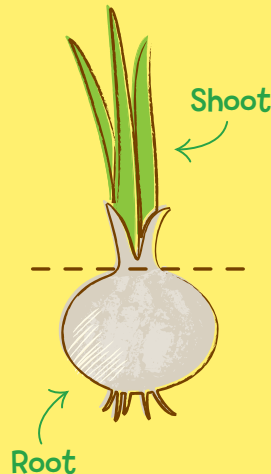
Rutabagas



Turnips

Roots vs. Shoots

The part of a plant you can see growing above ground (stems, leaves and petals) is called the shoot. The part that grows underground is commonly called the root. Roots absorb and store water and nutrients from the soil to nourish the plant.



Why root for underground veggies?

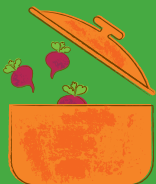
- Nutrition profiles vary, but they are generally rich in nutrients.
- They are easy to cook in so many different ways. Read on for our fun idea list!
- Most varieties are economical and small amounts can really fill you up.
- Root vegetables vary wildly in their flavors, ranging from earthy to sweet to spicy.
- They can be stored longer than many other veggies so it's easy to keep them on hand. Some don't even need refrigeration.
- Although most are in season during cooler months, they can grow in a range of conditions and are available year round.

UN-BEETABLE PAINTINGS

Ask mom or dad to cook beets for dinner, then use the leftover liquid to paint a masterpiece.

What you'll need:

beet cooking liquid, paintbrushes, watercolor paper, crayons/markers/colored pencils



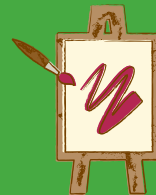
Step 1:

Boil or steam fresh beets and save the colorful liquid. For extra fun, cook red beets in one pot and golden beets in a separate pot, so you have two colors of beet liquid to use.



Step 2:

Let the beet "paint" cool. (Store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.)



Step 3:

Paint! If the color comes out lighter than you would like, let the paint dry, then add more coats of beet paint on areas you would like to appear darker. (Careful not to get the paper too soggy or it may tear.)



Step 4:

Use markers, crayons or colored pencils to add detail and decoration to your picture.

NEXT STEPS: Rooting for More?

Once you learn to cook one type of root vegetable, you can apply the same methods to many others (with some exceptions like horseradish).

Most can simply be boiled, steamed, roasted or grilled and seasoned the way you like. Have fun experimenting to learn what your family likes best.

Favorite Preparation Methods:

- **Chips or Fries:** sliced, seasoned and baked in the oven.
Try it with: turnips, beets, sweet potatoes
- **Raw:** grated or matchstick cut for dipping, salads and slaws.
Try it with: beets, jicama, radishes
- **Gratins:** thinly sliced or chopped, layered and baked casserole style.
Try it with: sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips, or a combination of root and other veggies
- **Mashed or Puréed:** after boiling or roasting (thinned/flavored with broth, milk, etc.)
Try it with: parsnips, celeriac, carrots
- **“Souped Up:”** add chunks or puréed root veggies to soups or stews.
Try it with: all types of potatoes, leeks, carrots, beets

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Get to the Root of It

With so many varieties, there's a root veggie every kid can dig. It may just take a little experimenting to uncover their favorites.

- **Try different textures:** chunky or smooth, moist or dry, crispy or soft, thick or thin.
- **Methods:** If they don't like it, try roasted or mashed next time.
- **Try skins on and skins off.**
- **Try milder tasting root veggies** (carrots or jicama for example) with your child's favorite dips or sauces.
- **Try seasoning** sweet ones with something spicy and spicy ones with something sweet for flavor contrast.
- **Replace white potatoes** with more nutrient dense sweet potatoes in as many recipes as you can.
- **Hide root vegetables** (especially carrots, sweet potatoes or beets) in baked goods.

QUICK & EASY RECIPES

Let kids help with the simple steps in **bold**!

It's a snap to add root vegetables to your busy day with these simple recipes.

BREAKFAST

Sweet Potato Hash Browns

2 medium-sized sweet potatoes, peeled and grated 1 small onion, thinly sliced salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons vegetable oil dash of cayenne pepper (optional)

Simply swapping white potatoes for orange ones gives your hash browns a nutrition bonus. **1. Let kids help with the potato peeling and grating.** **2. Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Add cayenne pepper if you like a little spice or add a pinch of any other spices you like.** **3. Form the mixture into patties (usually makes 4-6).** **4. Heat the oil in a skillet on medium heat.** **5. Add patties to the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes on each side or until golden brown.**

LUNCH

Simple Beet Chips

2 medium beets, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. (If you do not have parchment, lightly grease the cookie sheet with a bit more oil.) **2. Slice beets as thinly as possible.** **3. Place beets in a large bowl, then toss with olive oil and salt and pepper until coated.** **Tip:** Add other spices of your choice to the bowl to make flavored chips (try Cajun seasoning, taco seasoning, lemon pepper and other blends). **4. Arrange beets in a single layer on the baking sheet.** **5. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until crisp.** Keep a close eye so they do not burn.

DINNER

Speedy Baked Sweet Potatoes

1 sweet potato per person toppings of your choice

1. Poke each potato a few times with a fork to pierce the skin (this releases pressure to keep them from exploding in your microwave). **2. Arrange sweet potatoes on a large plate like spokes on a wheel (one end of all the potatoes touching in the center) and place the plate in your microwave.** **3. Cook 5 minutes for the first potato + 2 more minutes for each additional potato (two potatoes = 7 minutes, three = 9 minutes and so on).** **4. Cut open the skin on top and use a spoon to eat the sweet flesh right out of the skin.**

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