

PARSNIP



PARSNIPS, a member of the Umbelliferae family, closely resemble their relatives parsley and carrot. Parsnips are generally thicker than carrots and are paler in color. The flavor has been described as nutty, spicy or peppery. Parsnips are available from fall to early summer --they can stay in the ground over winter and tend to be sweeter after a frost.

STORAGE

- ◆ Remove greens from the tops of parsnips before storing in a paper bag in the refrigerator drawer.
- ◆ Although **they will keep for up to a month** in the refrigerator, parsnips become more bitter with age and are **best eaten fresh**.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Scrub parsnips well and slice or chop as you would a carrot.
- ◆ Very large parsnips may need to have their **woody cores removed**. Cut off the thin end and set aside. Cut the thick portion in half and dig out the core with a sharp spoon. Discard the core and chop the vegetable as usual.
- ◆ Parsnips can be eaten raw like carrots but are more **delicious and digestible** when cooked. They are **well suited for prolonged cooking**, as in casseroles, stews, or oven-roasting. To preserve nutrients, cook with the skin on and eat with skin or peel after cooking.
- ◆ Parsnips can be **steamed, boiled, sautéed or braised**. Try combining parsnips with other root vegetables like beets, carrots, and potatoes, tossing with olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper and roasting in a 400 degree oven, stirring occasionally until browned and cooked through.

Nutritional Information

Parsnips are a good source of fiber and folate. Adequate intake of fiber is helpful in maintaining low cholesterol levels and aids in digestion. A healthy diet with enough folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with certain birth defects of the brain or spinal chord

Parsnip Recipes

Sautéed Parsnips with Cinnamon

- 1 pound parsnips
- 3 Tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

Wash the parsnips carefully and slice them into 1/4 inch pieces. (The thinner you slice them, the faster they will cook). Melt the butter in a pan. Sauté the parsnips until they are tender (about 20 minutes). Season with cinnamon and serve.

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Parsnip and Carrots

- 2 large carrots, sliced
- 2 pounds parsnips, sliced
- 4 Tablespoons butter/olive oil
- 1 teaspoon honey or sugar (optional)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tablespoon parsley, chopped

In medium pot, cover carrots and parsnips with water, boil until tender. Drain them and using a large spoon, mash with butter or oil and sugar. Stir in milk. Season with nutmeg, salt, and pepper to taste. Garnish with parsley before serving, if desired.

Recipe contributed by Adrienne Maher, Just Food dietetic intern, 2001



Parsnip Chips

- Parsnips, peeled and sliced about 1/8 inch thick or less
- Salt
- Peanut oil or olive oil and butter (depending on which method you choose)

Parsnips can be deep-fried or "oven-fried". If you are deep-frying them, put the parsnips in a deep pot of peanut oil heated to 365 degrees, until they are golden brown. Drain on paper towels, sprinkle salt on top and serve immediately. If you are oven-frying, toss the slices lightly in olive oil or butter, sprinkle the salt on them and spread them on a baking sheet. Roast in a preheated oven at 475 degrees for about 5 minutes. Turn them over with a spatula and cook for another 5 minutes or until nicely browned.

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