



February's featured vegetable is:

Root Vegetables

Turnip: Shaped like a bulb, mostly white with a red-purple top; a smaller version of a rutabaga.

Radish: Has a somewhat hot taste which is found in the skin. Typically red but also come in the white variety.

Rutabaga: Half yellow-orange, half burgundy-purple. Tastes like a cross between a cabbage and a turnip.

Parsnip: Looks like a carrot but is bigger and has a creamy color. Known for its sweet flavor and nutty fragrance.

Onion: Can have a sharp, spicy, tangy, mild, or sweet flavor. Come in varieties from purple, to yellow to white.

Beets: Usually a purple-crimson color; choose beets that are firm and smooth-skinned.

Carrot: Is very crunchy when raw and has a sweet taste. Typically orange but comes in other colors, too.

Root for your new favorite vegetables:

- Turnips, radishes, rutabaga, parsnips, onions, beets and carrots are all root vegetables.
- *Turnips* can be eaten raw, grated into salads, added to soups and casseroles. Young turnips do not need to be peeled, but older turnips do. Slice or dice before cooking.
- *Radishes* can be peeled if you prefer a milder flavor. They add color and fun flavor to vegetable trays, salads, or soups.
- *Rutabagas* need to be peeled before they are used. They can be sliced and served raw with dip. They can also be boiled until soft and added to other dishes or served as a side.
- *Parsnips* are rarely eaten raw. They are great roasted, steamed, or pureed and added to broth to use as a base for soup.
- *Onions* are most often cut and added to other foods, like cooked foods and salads or as a garnish; they are rarely eaten on their own. Try roasting them. They are sweet!
- *Beets* can be roasted, marinated in lemon juice, olive oil, and fresh herbs, or grated to become a beautiful garnish for salads.
- *Carrots* are great raw, chopped, or grated. Consider adding a handful of grated carrot to your baked goods like cakes or cookies. Also great in a fruit smoothie.

What is a root vegetable, anyway? They are all roots of plants that can be eaten and taste great.

Root vegetables could easily be considered the "athletes" of the vegetable world. Not only are they burly nutrient powerhouses, but they are also very flexible—they work great in teams, so you can add them to a variety of main dishes. Root vegetables are also impressive individual competitors as they make great stand-alone side dishes. Even though vegetables can't "root" for themselves, their different colors speak volumes about their numerous health benefits.

Why root vegetables?
Why me? Why now?

Your favorite square root: Oven-roasted Vegetables

*This recipe makes the vegetables you roast taste amazingly sweet! Make sure they are nice and brown.
Any root or winter vegetable may be used such potatoes, carrots, rutabaga, pumpkin, or squash.

- 3 cups cubed, peeled sweet potato
 - 2 cups cubed, peeled turnips
 - 2 cups sliced parsnip
 - 3 garlic cloves, halved
 - 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- Optional:*
- ¾ teaspoon salt
 - ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 - ¼ teaspoon pepper
 - ¼ cup chopped parsley
 - ½ teaspoon dried thyme



Preheat oven to 400°. Combine all the ingredients in a resealable bag and toss to evenly coat the vegetables with oil. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Roast for 45 minutes or until tender and lightly browned, stirring after the first 10 minutes and occasionally during the remaining time. Yield: 8 servings

New ways to flavor your carrots

- Do you like pickles? Soak raw carrots in pickle juice.
- Do you like spicy? Soak raw carrots in jalapeño juice for a nice "kick".
- Sprinkle your carrots with some sesame salt:
4 Tablespoons sesame seed
2 tsp salt
Toast sesame seeds lightly in a dry skillet. Add salt and lightly grind together in a small mill, blender, or food processor.
- Toss cooked carrots with a mixture of 2 T orange juice, 2 tsp honey, and a dash of ground ginger.

Recipes

Did you know???

- Another name for a rutabaga is "Swedish turnip" or "Swedes"
- In Scotland, people used to use rutabagas instead of pumpkins for Jack-o-lanterns.
- The ancient Egyptians believed that onions made people strong. Because of this, they fed onions to the people building the pyramids.
- Even though you eat the orange root part of the carrot, it used to be grown mostly for its leaves and seeds (the green part that you can see when it's growing).
- Radishes were so important in the country of Greece which is across the ocean, that they made gold statues of radishes!
- Cold weather helps parsnips get their delicious flavor. They are sweetest in the winter.

Kitchen Secrets

Do you ever notice your mom crying when she cuts onions? Tell her this little secret: Wear a diving mask or swimming goggles. Just kidding! Well, this will work, but she may feel a little silly. There are actually a couple of other methods that work well to stop tears:

- Put the onion in the freezer for about 10-15 minutes before cutting
- Soak the onion in water before cutting
- Cut the onions in a room where there is lots of air moving around. The air will help take the onion smell away.

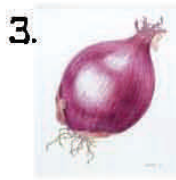
Your mom will be so grateful for the brilliant help you've given her!

Need a giggle? Try these...

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Turnip.
Turnip who?
Turnip the heat, it's cold in here!
What did one carrot say to the other when he was asked a question?
Hang on a minute while I root around for the answer!

"BEET" YOUR COMPETITION AND DO THIS MATCHING EXERCISE!

Draw a line from the picture to the name of the root vegetable. Answers are upside-down at the bottom of this page.



- A. RADISH
- B. CARROT
- C. RUTABAGA
- D. PARSNIP
- E. TURNIP
- F. ONION
- G. BEET