

Ask an Expert – Radishes: A Root Awakening

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Radishes are great on salads, but many people don't know they can also be used as a substitute for potatoes. Besides being versatile in the kitchen, they are also one of the easiest vegetables to grow in the garden and are among the first crops that can be planted in early spring.

Radishes germinate quickly and are simple to care for, making them an ideal crop for introducing kids to gardening.

Using an inexpensive kitchen thermometer to gauge soil temperature is the best way to know when to start planting radishes. The minimum soil temperature is 40 degrees F, though they prefer temperatures closer to 55 degrees F. Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep, and they should emerge in 5 to 10 days. Once the seedlings appear, thin them so plants are spaced 1 to 3 inches apart, depending on the variety and size you want.

Radishes are ready to harvest in 25 to 55 days, based on the variety. Salad-style radishes mature quickly, while daikon and kimchi types take longer to develop.

Radishes are nutritious. They are low in calories and rich in potassium, vitamin C, folate, and fiber. When radishes are roasted or cooked, their sharp flavor softens and becomes more earthy. They can also be blended with potatoes to thicken soup, improving the balance and texture. Radishes pair well with potatoes, onions, garlic, and leeks.

Easy Roasted Radishes

Recipe by Taun Beddes

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch radishes (about 1 pound)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- Optional: 2 cloves garlic (or garlic powder), thyme, or rosemary

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Trim and halve larger radishes so they cook evenly.
3. Toss radishes with olive oil, salt, pepper, and optional garlic or herbs.
4. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet.
5. Roast for 18 to 25 minutes, turning once halfway through, until lightly browned and tender.

Optional finish: Add a squeeze of lemon juice, a drizzle of balsamic vinegar, or a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese before serving.

Contact

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