

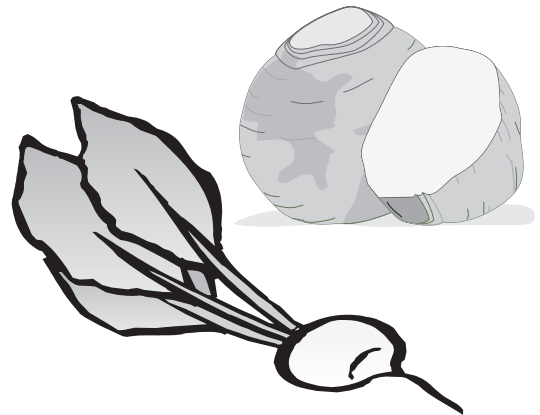
Rutabagas and Turnips

Brassica napobrassica (rutabaga)

Brassica rapa rapifera (turnip)

The turnip is a capricious vegetable, which seems reluctant to show itself at its best.

Waverley Root, 'Food' (1980)



Nutrition:

Rutabagas and turnips both provide significant sources of dietary fiber and potassium, along with a variety of vitamins and minerals. Rutabagas are a good source of vitamin A (significantly more than turnips), vitamin C, calcium, B-vitamins, folate, iron, magnesium, manganese, plus some other trace minerals. Turnip roots are a good source of complex carbohydrates, along with vitamin C, calcium, and some trace minerals. Turnip greens are very high in vitamins A and C, plus they provide significant amounts of calcium, vitamin E, folate, B-vitamins, magnesium, copper and manganese. (2,5,19)

Storage:

Rutabagas: Store rutabagas in a cool, dry place or in the refrigerator for two weeks or longer. Stored at room temperature, they will keep for up to a week. **Turnips:** If the turnips are young, remove the greens and store them separately from the roots. These can be eaten in a variety of ways. Old greens should be composted. The **roots** can be stored in the refrigerator for up to four months. The **greens** can be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper draw of the refrigerator for up to a week, though it is best to use them in 2 to 3 days. (1,5,19)

Preparation:

Rutabaga: Trim off the stems and tap roots before carefully cutting rutabagas in half lengthwise. Quartering them may make it easier to peel them, especially if the rutabagas are large. If the skin is very thick, a sharp knife may work better than a vegetable peeler. Once peeled, the rutabagas can be sliced, diced, cut into julienne strips or grated before cooking. **Turnips:** Very young turnips with thin skins need not be peeled, though more mature turnips should be peeled. Turnips can be eaten raw, sliced, diced, cut into julienne sticks or grated before cooking. Turnip greens should be washed and spun dry, then used as you would other greens.

(1,3,5,19,20)

Cooking Methods:

Rutabagas will take longer to cook than turnips and both should only be cooked to the point of being tender. Keep the flavors mild and sweet by not overcooking. Do not use aluminum or iron pots, or the vegetables may darken.

Bake/Roast: Slice rutabagas or turnips into 1/4-inch slices and arrange in a shallow baking dish. Sprinkle the slices with several tablespoons of water, cover, and bake in a 350 degree oven until tender: 50 to 60 minutes for rutabagas, and 30 to 45 minutes for turnips. Add onion slices for extra flavor, or bake quartered roots along with meat or poultry.

Boil: Whole: place whole roots into boiling water, cover and cook until tender, lifting the lid occasionally to release the gases. Cooking time: 25 to 35 minutes for rutabagas, and 20 to 30 minutes for turnips. **Sliced:** Cook sliced roots in a skillet with an inch of boiling water. Cooking time 7 to 10 minutes for rutabagas, and 6 to 8 minutes for turnips. A bit of sugar added to the cooking water will help to sweeten the roots.

Blanch: Larger rutabagas and turnips may have a stronger flavor, which can be reduced by blanching them whole for five minutes before proceeding to bake, braise, or stir-fry them. They can also be cubed and blanched for 1 to 2 minutes in boiling water.

Braise: Using a heavy skillet, place sliced or cubed roots in enough broth to cover the bottom of the skillet. Cover and simmer until tender: 15 to 20 minutes for rutabagas, 10 to 12 minutes for turnips.

Steam: Steam roots in a basket over boiling water until tender, 25 to 35 minutes for cut up rutabagas, 20 to 25 minutes for medium-sized whole turnips, 12 to 15 minutes for sliced or baby turnips, 4 minutes for diced turnips.

Stir-fry: Thinly sliced roots can be stir-fried until tender-crisp: 6 to 7 minutes for rutabagas or turnips.

(1,3,5,19,20)

Tips and Suggestions:

* Serve raw rutabagas or turnips on a **vegetable tray:** cut them into slender sticks or cubes. Or make "curls" using a vegetable peeler. You may want to blanch them for 1 to 2 minutes to make them easier to eat.

* Cook tender young **turnip greens** as you would spinach or use them raw in salads.

* **Mashed turnips or rutabagas** are excellent when prepared with garlic, nutmeg, milk and parsley.

- * Add cubed turnips or rutabagas to **soups or stews**.
- * Grate turnips and add to your favorite **slaw recipe**.
- * Shredded, julienned or diced turnips make a good addition to **stir-fry** recipes.
- * Try baked rutabagas served with your favorite **baked potato toppings**.
- * In general, rutabagas and turnips **can be interchanged** in recipes, though the flavors will be slightly different, as turnips have a sharper flavor, and rutabagas have a milder, sweeter flavor.
- * Try making a **salad from grated turnips**, grated carrots and grated beets, adding diced apples, raisins, chopped nuts and sunflower seeds for flavor and texture. Dress with your favorite vinaigrette dressing.
- * **Steam baby turnips** for 12 to 15 minutes, then top with butter and herbs to season.
- * Cooked rutabagas and turnips are good when served with **herbed butter or cream sauces**.
- * **Herbs** that go well with turnips and rutabagas include: dill, parsley, basil, tarragon, oregano or caraway.

(1,3,19,20)

Yields:

1 pound fresh =

5 cups grated

4 cups sliced or chopped

3½ cups cubed

2-3 cups finely diced

2 cups cooked and pureed

Joy of Gardening Cookbook