

Parsnip

Parsnips originated in Asia and Europe. They were introduced to North America in the 17th century. People used to believe that it was a pain reliever and used it for this purpose.

Parsnips are a winter vegetable, as they need to be exposed to the cold for several weeks before they are ready to eat. Many farmers wait until early spring to harvest them. This chill exposure changes the starch content to sugar and sweetens the vegetable. At times throughout history, parsnips have been used in place of sugar.

The paler white the parsnip is, the sweeter it will taste. Avoid yellow and brown parsnips, as they are going bad. Be on the lookout for a parsnip about eight inches in length- larger parsnips are tough.

Parsnips are a good source of fiber, vitamins C and E, folate, and manganese. Parsnips are a root vegetable, much like carrots, turnips, beets, radish, and ginger. Cow parsnip is not a part of the family however; it belongs in the parsley family. You can store, prepare, and eat parsnips just like you would a carrot.



Varieties

Hollow crown are fully developed, 12 inch long, tapered, and relatively free of hair-like side roots.

All America are broad-shouldered and 12 inches with white flesh and a small core.

Harris model are 10-12 inches long with smooth, white flesh and free of branching roots.

Fun Facts

- In Europe, parsnips were used to sweeten jams and cakes before sugar was widely available.
- People used to use parsnips to relieve toothaches and sore feet.
- Parsnip can be eaten fresh and is good to use when cooking soup, stew, casserole, or other savory dishes.
- Parsnips have a nutty, peppery taste when eaten raw.



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