

# Turnip



## History

It is thought that turnips have been grown for the past 4,000 years in Asia. By 300 B.C., turnips were domesticated and grown in Greek civilizations. Ancient Romans used them to remove wrinkles and to treat measles, frostbite, and arthritis. They reached Virginia in 1609.

Turnips belong in the brassicaceae family with radishes, mustard, and arugula. The roots, stems, and leaves are all edible. The stringy portion extending out the bottom is called the tap root, and is typically trimmed off before turnips are sold. The bulb portion is a good source of vitamin C, and the greens are full of vitamins and minerals such as folate, calcium, and vitamin E.

Turnips are consumed by livestock and humans. Larger turnips are tough and fed to animals if they cannot be cooked. The smaller the bulb is, the sweeter it will taste. The color of the bulb depends upon its exposure to sunlight.

## Fun Facts

- Many families turned to turnips as a food source during World War I, when coffee, flour, meat, bread, and potatoes were all scarce.
- Turnips were likely served at the first Thanksgiving.
- Large turnips were used to carve Jack-O-Lanterns prior to the pumpkin.
- Turnips have a sweet, peppery, radish-like taste.
- The leaves taste like mustard greens that can be cooked and consumed like spinach.
- Turnips used to be cultivated as a source of edible oil in the past using the seed.



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