

# ROOT VEGGIES: TURNIP

**Spanish:** navo **Russian:** repa (репа) **Vietnamese:** củ cải

Root vegetables have been part of the human diet for nearly 5 million years. They can be harvested in the wild a number of varieties. Early American colonists and settlers were dependent on root vegetables for their ability to be stored underground during long, cold winters. Turnip fossils dating back thousands of years have been found in caves in China.

**FIND OUT MORE:**

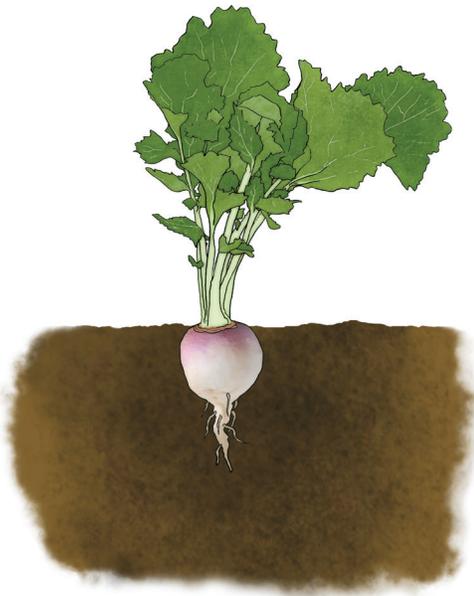
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5521.pdf>

[http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed\\_News\\_Roots\\_Tubers.pdf](http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed_News_Roots_Tubers.pdf)



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## FROM SEED TO PLATE



Like any plant, vegetables have five main components: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. Depending on the plant, we eat different parts. With root vegetables – we eat the roots! Roots maintain their function of anchoring the plant, absorbing nutrients and water and storing energy for the plant.

**FIND OUT MORE:**

[http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed\\_News\\_Roots\\_Tubers.pdf](http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed_News_Roots_Tubers.pdf)

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Rutabagas were created by combining  
turnips and cabbage!

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/turnip.cfm>

## IN THE GARDEN

Turnips are a fun and easy plant for the garden! They prefer cooler weather, which allows to for two plantings throughout the season. There are a number of varieties to choose from and best of all: you can prepare the tops or greens as an extra treat!



**SUN:** Can tolerate half sun conditions.



**WATER:** Turnip seed requires consistent soil moisture for germination. After germination they are hardier, but make sure to water regularly.



**SOIL:** Turnips grow best in fertile, well-drained soil with high organic matter content.



**SEEDS:** Turnip seeds germinate well, so it is not necessary to seed extra as insurance.



**PLANT:** For a summer harvest, plant seeds as early as possible in the spring. For fall harvest, plant in late July/early August.



**SPACE:** Plant seeds ½ inch deep and 2-6 inches apart in a rows 1-3 ft apart depending on the variety and size.



**CARE:** If planting in cells, thin each cell to one plant to ensure proper growth.



**HARVEST:** Turnips can be grown for both a spring and fall harvest. They are best flavored when they are small or medium sized. Larger turnips can become woody and fibrous. Spring planted turnip can be harvested in mid-late July, and late summer turnip (aka late season turnip) can be harvested in October.

### FIND OUT MORE:

<http://nwrec.hort.oregonstate.edu/rutabaga.html>  
<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/turnip.cfm>

## STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Choose young, small bulbs - they are the most tender.
- Avoid large, overgrown turnips – they are sharp in flavor and tough and woody in texture.
- Store turnips in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.
- Store turnip greens and roots separately. Use greens within 3-4 days. Roots will keep for a week or more.

### FIND OUT MORE:

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5521.pdf>  
<http://nwrec.hort.oregonstate.edu/rutabaga.html>

## IN THE KITCHEN

Turnips are a great all seasons vegetable. You can eat them raw in the spring and early summer with salt and pepper or in salads; you can chop them to add to soups and stews in the fall and winter. Add cooked turnips to mashed potatoes for extra flavor; roast them with carrots and other roots for a hardy side dish. Get creative, and try turnip au gratin (roasted turnips with cheese and bread crumbs).

Try the classroom recipe at home, with this family-size version:

### ROOT VEGETABLE PANCAKES

Serves 4-6

#### INGREDIENTS

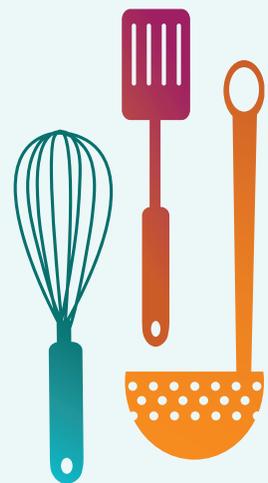
- ½ lb. parsnips, or a mix of root vegetables (like rutabaga, turnip, or beets)
- 2 scallions or green onions, green parts chopped
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup of flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper, or to taste
- 2-4 Tbs. vegetable oil

*Optional, to serve:*

1Tbs. soy sauce and 1 tsp. rice vinegar (dipping sauce) OR plain yogurt

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Grate root vegetables. Chop scallions/green onions.
2. Whisk eggs in a medium bowl with the salt and pepper. Whisk in flour.
3. Stir in shredded root vegetables.
4. Heat oil in a medium pan or skillet.
5. Form the mixture into patties roughly three inches in size. You should be able to make about 6 patties. Place patties on pan, 2 inches apart. Not all patties will fit in one batch.
6. Cook for 2-3 minutes on the first side, then flip and cook for another 2-3 minutes until browned on both sides.
7. Continue cooking pancakes in batches. Add oil as needed.
- 8. Serve hot, plain or with dipping sauce or yogurt**



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The family newsletter for root vegetables can be sent home at the beginning of the month. The newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Print the first page only, or add photos and stories to the second page and print both sides for families.



### GET PARENTS' ATTENTION!

- Attach the newsletter to the child by attaching a string of yarn to the paper and making a newsletter “necklace” or pinning the newsletter to an article of clothing.
- Attach the newsletter to a drawing or other piece of artwork created by the child
- Get a set of “Ask me about \_\_\_\_” stickers or nametags, or use blank nametag stickers to draw attention to the fruit or vegetable of the month. Send each child home with an “Ask me about root vegetables!” sticker for the root vegetables month.
- Offer tastes of the recipe at the month at a parent meeting, or when parents pick up their children from your site.



### ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family newsletters engage families as partners in helping children to develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.