

Reasons for the Seasons

Produce Tips for Placer & Nevada County Consumers

Local Season-
October thru
February



PARSNIPS

Parsnips are a cold-weather root vegetable that resemble a top-heavy, ivory-colored carrot. In fact, the carrot and the parsnip are relatives. Parsnips have a mild celery-like fragrance and a sweet, nutty flavor.

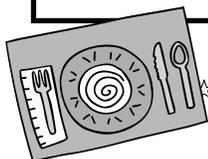
Nutrition Benefits

Parsnips are:

- ◆ Good source of folic acid
- ◆ Good source of potassium
- ◆ Good source of fiber
- ◆ Good source of vitamins C and K

Serving Tips

- ◆ This hardy veggie is easy to prepare and makes an excellent addition to soups and stews.
- ◆ To bring out their sweetness, accent parsnips with nutmeg, ginger, mace, or cinnamon.



Family Meal Ideas

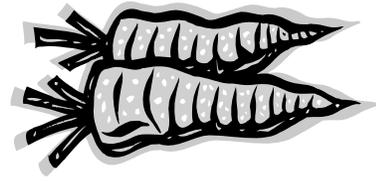
Children learn basic cooking skills and to appreciate a variety of tasty food, when they are involved in mealtime preparation. So, get the kids involved in helping prepare a meal.

- Good kitchen helpers usually make good food tasters.
- Children learn best by doing, not watching.
- Let every eater have an opportunity to help plan a day's menu.
- Take turns rotating meal planning to satisfy everyone's taste buds.

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PARSNIPS



Locally Grown Varieties

All American, Hollow Crown, Gladiator, and Harris Model

Shopping Tips

- ✓ Parsnips range in color from pale yellow to off-white.
- ✓ Parsnips can grow up to 20 inches long; they are the most tender when about 8 inches.
- ✓ Very large parsnips tend to be over mature and have a tough woody core.
- ✓ The root should be firm and fairly smooth.
- ✓ An overabundance of hair-like rootlets is undesirable. Soft, withered parsnips are likely to be fibrous.
- ✓ Parsnips with moist spots should also be avoided.



Handling and Storage

- ◆ Like carrots, parsnips keep best in a perforated bag in the vegetable bin of the refrigerator.
- ◆ They can last for up to three to four weeks.
- ◆ If the green tops, or parts of them, are attached, remove them before storing. They'll draw moisture from the roots.

Preparation

Unlike carrots, parsnips are almost always eaten cooked, as they tend to be quite fibrous. Be careful not to overcook them. Their flavor is sweetest when just tender. Brief cooking also helps to preserve nutrients. Just before cooking, cut off the root and leaf ends; trim any major rootlets or knobs.

- ◆ **Baking:** Place whole or cut-up parsnips in a baking dish with a cover. Cooking time: 20 to 30 minutes in a 350 degree oven.
- ◆ **Boiling:** Drop whole or cut-up parsnips into a pan of boiling water and simmer until tender. Cooking time: 5 to 15 minutes.
- ◆ **Microwaving:** Cut parsnips into large chunks and place them in a microwavable dish with 2 tablespoons of liquid. Cover with a lid or vented plastic wrap. Cooking time: 4 to 6 minutes.
- ◆ **Steaming:** This method is by far the best way to cook parsnips, as it brings out their sweetness without them getting mushy. Place trimmed, well-scrubbed parsnips in a steamer and cook over boiling water. Cooking times: For whole parsnips, 20 to 30 minutes; for cut-up pieces, 5 to 15 minutes.

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SWEET GOOEY PARSNIPS

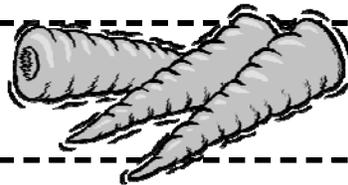
(4 SERVINGS)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound parsnips
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

1. Scrape or peel the parsnips, then cut into sticks about the size of your little finger. Dry well with paper toweling.
2. In a heavy 10-inch skillet, melt the butter. Add the parsnips, shaking to coat.
3. Sprinkle with nutmeg.
4. Cover tightly and sauté on medium heat for about 5 to 10 minutes. The parsnips should be tender and gooey, and slightly caramelized.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste.



PARSNIP MASH

(6-8 SERVINGS)

INGREDIENTS:

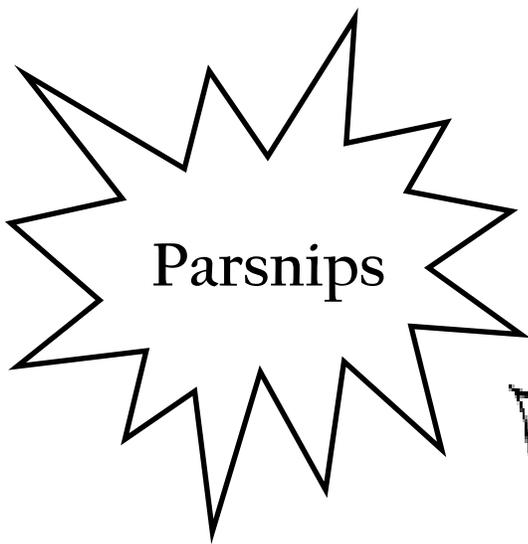
- 2 pounds parsnips, peeled and sliced, about 1/3-inch thick
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 to 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into bits
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a saucepan, combine the parsnips and salt and enough water to cover them. Bring to a boil and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes or until tender and two-thirds of the water has evaporated.
2. Mash the mixture and season with salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste. Set the pan over another containing simmering water, cover and let cook for 20 to 30 minutes more.

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Coloring Activity Page for Kids



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