

Carrot and Parsnip Soup

Introduced to the United States from Europe in the early 17th century, the parsnip is a creamy white root vegetable similar in shape and sweetness to the carrot.

In a large soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the onion and sauté, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Increase the heat to high, add the parsnips, carrots, stock and water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.

Using a blender and working in batches, puree the soup on high speed until smooth, 3 to 4 minutes per batch. Strain through a chinois set over a clean soup pot and, using the pestle, press on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Place over low heat and reheat to serving temperature. Season with salt and pepper.

While the soup is heating, make the yogurt garnish: In a small bowl, whisk the yogurt with enough milk to make a barely fluid paste. Season with salt and pepper.

To serve, ladle the soup into warmed bowls and drizzle with the yogurt. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve immediately. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Seasonal Celebration Series, *Winter*, by Joanne Weir (Time-Life Books, 1997).

Ingredients for Carrot and Parsnip Soup

1½ Tbs. unsalted butter

1 yellow onion, chopped

1¼ lb. parsnips, peeled and coarsely chopped

1 lb. carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped

6 cups chicken stock

4 cups water

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

For the yogurt garnish:

⅓ cup plain yogurt

About 2 Tbs. milk

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1½ Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Popular Root Vegetables

- Beets
- Carrots
- Celery root (celeriac)
- Daikon radishes
- Ginger
- Jerusalem artichokes
- Jicama
- Parsnips
- Potatoes
- Radishes
- Rutabagas
- Salsify
- Sweet potatoes
- Turnips
- Yams

Ingredients for Roasted Autumn Vegetables

8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

2 large sweet potatoes or yams, scrubbed, peeled and cut into rounds ½ inch thick

4 large carrots, peeled and thickly sliced on the diagonal

4 large parsnips, peeled and cut into rounds ½ inch thick

3 Tbs. wildflower honey

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

½ cup golden raisins

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Technique Class: The World of Root Vegetables

Root vegetables may not be the most attractive-looking specimens in the produce bin, but these humble tubers—beets, parsnips and carrots, among them—are winning the hearts of restaurant chefs across the country. And you’ll find they hold a delicious place in your own kitchen as well.

Autumn is prime time for savoring these hardy roots because the frosty weather transforms their starches into sugars. Root vegetables are especially suited to roasting and braising—cooking techniques that intensify the vegetables’ natural sweetness. You can also simmer them in soups and stews, or steam and mash them for side dishes. However they’re prepared, root vegetables will add a sweet note to your autumn table.

Roasted Autumn Vegetables

The first frost turns parsnips sweet, so this creamy-colored root vegetable is at its best in late autumn and early winter. It is excellent for roasting. Add parsnips to the pan alongside other root vegetables when you roast meats and poultry. To prepare parsnips (and other root vegetables), peel with a vegetable peeler, then cut into thick slices. Like potatoes, parsnips will start to discolor after they are sliced unless they are sprinkled with an acidic ingredient, such as lemon juice.

Preheat an oven to 425°F. Using 2 Tbs. of the melted butter, grease a roasting pan just large enough to hold the vegetables comfortably.

Arrange the sweet potatoes, carrots and parsnips in the prepared pan. Toss the vegetables with the remaining 6 Tbs. melted butter, then drizzle with the honey. Season with salt and pepper, and sprinkle with the lemon juice and raisins.

Roast the vegetables, turning twice, until tender, about 1 hour. Using 2 large spoons, gently transfer the vegetables to a warmed platter. Serve hot. Serves 8.

Serving Tip: If desired, before serving the roasted vegetables, stir them with a wooden spoon to break them up and mash them together for a homey, comforting side dish.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Roasting*, by Barbara Grunes (Simon & Schuster, 2002).

Ingredients for Root Vegetable Gratin with Gruyère
1 Tbs. unsalted butter
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 cups heavy cream
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
¼ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
1 lb. parsnips, peeled and sliced ⅝ inch thick
1 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced ⅝ inch thick
1 lb. celery root, peeled and sliced ⅝ inch thick
8 oz. Gruyère cheese, shredded
1 Tbs. minced fresh thyme
3 Tbs. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley

Root vegetable gratin with Gruyère cheese

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Ingredients for Winter Vegetable Stew
4 Tbs. olive oil
1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
10 garlic cloves, smashed
2 Tbs. tomato paste
½ cup medium-dry sherry
½ cup chicken or vegetable stock
1 tsp. sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
1 butternut squash, about 2½ lb., peeled, seeded and cut into chunks
3 parsnips, peeled and cut into chunks
3 large carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
1 tsp. dried tarragon
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 bunch watercress, tough stems removed and leaves chopped

Root Vegetable Gratin with Gruyère

Enriched with cream and Gruyère cheese, this gratin is delicious alongside roasted meats and is hearty enough to be served as a vegetarian main dish, accompanied by a salad. A mandoline makes fast work of cutting the vegetables into thin, uniform slices.

Preheat an oven to 400°F. Butter a 3-quart baking dish.

In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the cream, salt, pepper and nutmeg and heat just until bubbles form around the edges of the pan, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand for 10 minutes.

Arrange a layer of parsnips, slightly overlapping, in the prepared dish. Arrange a layer of sweet potatoes on top, then a layer of celery root. Pour half of the cream mixture over the celery root, and sprinkle half of the cheese, thyme and parsley on top. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

Cover the dish with aluminum foil, place on a baking sheet and bake for 1 hour. Remove the foil and lightly press the gratin down with a spatula. Continue baking until the vegetables are tender and the top is golden brown, 15 to 30 minutes more. Let the gratin stand for 15 minutes before serving. Serves 12 to 15.

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Winter Vegetable Stew

This classic cool-weather dish sparkles with color and appealing flavors. Adding the lemon zest to the warm vegetables releases its citrusy aroma, providing a fresh dimension for a traditionally hearty dish. Accompany with a green salad and crusty country bread.

In a large, heavy fry pan over medium-high heat, warm 2 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the onion and celery and sauté until softened and beginning to brown, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and tomato paste and stir for 1 minute. Pour in the sherry, stock and vinegar and stir to scrape up any browned bits from the pan bottom. Transfer the contents of the fry pan to a slow cooker.

Add the butternut squash, parsnips, carrots and tarragon to the slow cooker, season with salt and pepper and stir to blend evenly. Cover and cook on low according to the manufacturer’s instructions until the vegetables are tender, about 5 hours.

Stir the lemon juice into the stew to taste, then transfer the stew to a warmed serving bowl or shallow individual bowls. Drizzle with the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil, top with the watercress and a sprinkle of lemon zest and serve immediately. Serves 6.

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Adapted from Williams-Sonoma The New Slow Cooker, by Brigit Binns (Weldon Owen, 2010).

Jerusalem Artichokes with Bacon and Balsamic Vinegar

Although Jerusalem artichokes have a nutty, potato-like flavor, they have a crisper texture than potatoes. They can be eaten raw or cooked and readily absorb other flavors, such as the salty taste of the Canadian bacon and the sweet tartness of the balsamic vinegar.

Using a vegetable peeler or paring knife, peel the Jerusalem artichokes. Then using a mandoline or sharp knife, cut into paper-thin slices. Set aside.

In a fry pan over medium heat, cook the bacon, turning as needed, until crisp, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain.

If the bacon rendered any fat, pour off all but 1 tsp. of the bacon fat from the pan. Add the olive oil to the pan and return to medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the Jerusalem artichokes, onion, roasted garlic and pepper. Sauté, stirring often, until the onion is translucent and the Jerusalem artichokes are tender to the bite but not soft, 4 to 5 minutes.

Transfer the contents of the fry pan to a serving bowl, then return the pan to medium heat. Pour in the vinegar and water and deglaze the pan, stirring to scrape up any browned bits from the pan bottom. Add the contents of the pan to the bowl. Add the bacon and stir gently to mix. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

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Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Lifestyles Series, Cooking from the Farmers' Market, by Georgeanne Brennan (Time-Life Books, 1999).

Maple-Glazed Root Vegetables

Maple syrup creates a wonderful, slightly sweet glaze for hearty root vegetables. This dish is the perfect accompaniment for roasted pork loin.

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, melt the butter. When the foaming subsides, add one-third *each* of the turnips, carrots and parsnips. Cook, without stirring, until the vegetables are browned on one side, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Repeat to brown the remaining vegetables in two more batches.

Return all of the vegetables to the pan. Stir in the broth, thyme and 2 Tbs. of the maple syrup, and season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook until the vegetables are just tender, 7 to 8 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has evaporated and the vegetables are glazed, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon juice and the remaining 1 Tbs. maple syrup. Serves 8 to 10.

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