



Digging Deep for Optimal Nutrition
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Root vegetables can be intimidating. Most of them have thick, strange looking skin and can look like they're from outer space. Some root vegetables are given the cold shoulder because they have the reputation of tasting earthy and even bitter.

Grown beneath the earth, root vegetables have allowed all of mother nature's healing benefits to seep in. Some of the most nutrient-dense food on the planet, root vegetables are able to absorb high amounts of minerals and vitamins from the soil. They are also able to absorb important nutrients from the sun through their leaves. They are high in vitamins C, D, B, E, K, and beta-carotene. In addition, they are a wonderful source of minerals like potassium, phosphorus, magnesium and some iron. The high amounts of nutrients and soluble fiber will help satisfy your cravings for junk foods. When it gets colder and you feel the need for warm, grounding foods, adding root vegetables to your diet can deliciously benefit both your body and soul.

A large European study looking at the links between diet, cancer and other diseases found that people who ate the most root veggies had a 13% lower risk of diabetes compared to those who ate the least. Root vegetables are especially rich in soluble and insoluble fiber, helping to boost healthy gut bacteria, lower high levels of blood fats and blood glucose, and reduce risk of type-2 diabetes, heart disease and bowel cancer.



Root vegetables are rich in slow-burning, complex carbohydrates which make you feel full. These fibrous, low calorie foods are excellent for people who are trying to lose weight or want to stay healthier. The complex carbohydrates can help reduce cravings for sweets, don't disrupt blood sugar, and help you to stay fueled for longer. Fiber is also great for regulating cholesterol and hormones, acting as a broom for your bowels, and helps to keep digestion regular.

The nutrients in root vegetables help to clean the blood, support the cardiovascular system, improve skin health and enhance eye health. Root veggies support optimal immune function and aid in the removal of toxins from the body.

Here are some examples of root vegetables and herbs that would make a great addition to any meal:

- **Ginger:** Helps treat arthritis, nausea, and heart conditions, relieves colds and headaches, aids digestion
- **Onion:** Antibacterial, increase bone density, have anti-inflammatory properties, and lower esophageal- and mouth-cancer risks. Peel off as little of the outer layers as possible, because the onion's flavonoids, which provide antibacterial benefits, are more concentrated in those areas.
- **Garlic:** Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial; cardiovascular, antiviral, cancer-preventative, and metabolism-boosting qualities.
- **Fennel:** Natural treatment for anemia, indigestion, constipation, and respiratory disorders
- **Yam:** Great source of vitamin B6 and potassium, improve organ function
- **Carrot:** Improves eyesight, protects against macular degeneration, promotes lung health.
- **Radish:** high in vitamin C, lower cholesterol, urinary tract disorders, and increase fresh oxygen in the bloodstream
- **Beet:** Provide support for the body's antioxidants and detoxification process, cancer preventative. You can even eat or juice the greens of the plant, which are also dense in nutrients.
- **Dandelion:** Improve overall liver function, aids your digestion, stimulates the release of bile from the liver into the gallbladder (aids constipation and absorption of fats), natural diuretic. Rich in vitamins A, B-complex, C and D, iron, potassium and zinc.
- **Burdock root:** Acne, eczema, endometriosis, psoriasis, and uterine fibroids. Burdock root tea can also be used as a wash to treat skin infections, eczema, and psoriasis.



Other roots to remember are parsnip, turnip, rutabaga, yucca, kohlrabi, celery root (celeriac), horseradish, daikon, turmeric, jicama, and Jerusalem artichokes.

Root vegetables are extremely versatile in cooking – try them steamed, smashed, roasted, pureed, raw, sautéed or in your favorite soup or stew.

Recipe: Take 2-3 pounds of your favorite root vegetables and herbs and chop them into similar sized cubes (1/2 inch works well). Place them in a baking dish and toss with 2-4 tablespoons of olive oil, sea salt and pepper. Feel free to add any other spices you like – cayenne, rosemary, curry, turmeric, etc. Place in the oven at 375F for 30-45 minutes, until vegetables are tender.

