

## Rutabagas

Rutabagas, sometimes called Swedes or yellow turnips, are an excellent storage crop and a delicious addition to your winter vegetable repertoire! They range in size from small, beet-sized to big and heavy roots. The purple-topped variety is common in New England, and these look similar to turnips. Select firm rutabagas in any size, avoid soft or wrinkled veggies.

Locally grown makes the difference: rutabagas are sweetened by frosts. Our local farmers can leave their rutabaga crop in the ground well into autumn, while imports from California or Mexico will never be sweetened by frost. Since these veggies do not have to travel far to market, they will be moist and their skins will be tender enough to eat (and not coated in wax, as supermarket rutabagas could be).

Rutabagas are packed with Vitamin C and are a good source of niacin. They store for long periods of time in the fridge, but keep them in a bag to help them preserve moisture.

If you have never tried a rutabaga, don't be intimidated! They are easy to prepare and delicious. Their flavor is not unlike turnips, some cabbages, and other familiar roots. You can mash them like potatoes, roast them with other winter veggies, and add them to soups and stews. One farmer we know has them with breakfast, simply grated then sautéed in butter, served under fried eggs. If you purchase a large rutabaga, simply slice off the amount needed for your recipe, then return to the fridge wrapped in a bag.

Enjoy winter cooking with the rutabaga. While you prepare and enjoy them in the kitchen, you are celebrating the talent of farmers who harvested this crop in the autumn to add diversity to our winter market cornucopia.



*Recipes and information from Seacoast Eat Local ([www.seacoateatlocal.org](http://www.seacoateatlocal.org)) made possible by a grant from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education ([www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)).*

**“...Tess slaved in the morning frosts and in the afternoon rains. When it was not swede-grubbing it was swede-trimming, in which process they sliced off the earth and the fibres with a bill-hook before storing the roots for future use. At this occupation they could shelter themselves by a thatched hurdle if it rained; but if it was frosty even their thick leather gloves could not prevent the frozen masses they handled from biting their fingers.”** *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, by Thomas Hardy. A scene in which the heroine is harvesting rutabagas in late fall.

### Maple Glazed Rutabagas

4 pounds rutabagas: washed, peeling optional, and cut into 3/4 inch cubes

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon of salt

1/4 cup maple syrup (Grade B is best for glazing, but Grade A works, too)

2 tablespoons of unsalted butter, in pieces

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Toss rutabaga with olive oil and salt in a large bowl.

On 2 baking sheets, roast the rutabagas till *nearly* done, about 30 to 35 minutes, turning with a large spatula to cook evenly.

Remove from oven, and drizzle maple syrup over rutabagas.

Return to oven for 20 minutes more, glazed rutabaga are done when they are tender. Scatter pieces of butter.

8 side servings.

### Rutabagas for Breakfast (a farmer's recipe)

Rutabaga

Butter

Thai Chile Sauce

Salt

Eggs

Grate as much rutabaga as you'd like accompany your winter breakfast. Melt butter in sauté pan, and add rutabaga over medium heat. Sautee till warmed through, stir in chile sauce, then push to one side of pan. On the other side of the pan, fry eggs in butter. Take off heat, then place a plate over the pan. Flip over to invert breakfast onto plate. Enjoy!

### Mashed Rutabaga with Roasted Apples

4 pounds rutabagas, peeled, cut into 3/4- to 1-inch cubes

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger

2 teaspoons honey

3 firm apples (about 1 3/4 pounds), peeled, cored, cut into 3/4-inch cubes

1/3 cup heavy cream

5 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon thyme

Salt, pepper

Cook rutabagas in pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 35 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400°F. Combine oil, lemon juice, ginger, and honey in large bowl. Add apples; toss to coat. Spread on prepared sheet. Roast until tender, turning apples every 10 minutes, about 35 minutes total.

Drain rutabagas; return to same pot. Mash to coarse puree. Stir over medium heat until excess moisture evaporates, 5 minutes. Add cream, butter, and thyme. Mix in apples and juice from the baking sheet. Season with salt and pepper. 8 side servings.