

 <p>www.brownboxorganics.com</p>	<p>EXPLORING ROOT VEGETABLES</p> <p>Dr. Karen Benton, Naturopathic Physician</p>	<p><i>Brown Box Organics not only offers free home or office organic produce and specialized grocery deliveries but also curbside pick up on call-ahead orders.</i></p> <p>(208) 362-5677</p>
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WHAT ARE ROOT VEGETABLES?

Root vegetables are underground parts of vegetables that are edible--namely the roots of plants. Most of the entries in a root vegetables list include tubers, taproots and corms and bulbs. These differ in form and structure from each other and are categorized separately in Botany. Many root vegetables are nutritionally rich. Some starchy varieties form important staples in many diets and communities across the world. Although the term "root vegetable" entails plants where the underground portions are used, their usage need not be limited to only roots. Many plants such as turnips and celery are utilized for their roots as well as their stalks and greens. Different geographical regions are suited for the growing of different vegetables, which make everyday vegetables for one part of the world, exotics for others.

List of Root Vegetables

The following list is categorized according to the structural type of root vegetable they signify - taproots, tuberous roots, tubers, bulbs, corms and rhizomes. All of these are routinely included in any root vegetables list.

Taproots

These are plant roots that grow vertically downwards, typically tapering in shape, forming a central root from which other roots sprout laterally. Many root vegetables that fall under this category are storehouses of energy, or storage organs of the plant. As a result, these root vegetables are rich in nutrients. The following is a list of taproots: bush carrots, beets, turnip, carrot, celery root, celeriac, rutabaga, parsnip, radish, parsley root, skirret, bush potato, and burdock root.

Tuberous Roots

These are also storage roots but differ from taproots mainly by being lateral roots that enlarge as a result of being modified to perform the function of storage. Many root tubers store nutrients during the periods when the plant is unable to grow, thus, enabling the plant to survive from a given year to the next. The following is a list of tuberous roots: native ginger, yellow lily yam, sweet potato, desert yam, prairie turnip, earthnut (pignut), cassava, and mauka.

Tubers

Though not strictly roots, stem tubers are considered as a part of a root vegetables list when they grow underground and typically shoots will sprout from the top of the stem tuber, while roots will grow from the bottom. Most stem tubers grow close to the soil surface. The most common example of stem tubers is potato—an inevitable part of any starchy vegetables list. The following are some examples of tubers: potato, hot potato, yams, Jerusalem artichoke, tigernut, daylily, earthnut pea, New Zealand yam, and ulluco.

Rhizomes

Rhizomes are stems rather than true roots, and are often found as a mass of roots growing horizontally under the ground. Rhizomes are the main stems of a plant, and can give rise to shoots as well as roots, although not all rhizomes grow underground. The following are some root vegetables which are rhizomes: ginseng, arrowroot, ginger, vanilla lily, and canna.

Corms and Bulbs

Corms are underground plant stems, similar in physical appearance to bulbs. However bulbs are commonly made up of layers of fleshy scales which are modified leaves; the most common example of a bulb is an onion. Corms are short, vertical stems that

grow underground, and are made up of solid tissue. The following is a list of corms and bulbs: waterlily, arrowhead, malanga, konjac, onion, garlic, shallots, bush onion, and fennel.

Diversity

As geographical patterns, soil and climatic conditions differ over the world, eating habits and cuisines mirror the differences in the vegetables, spices and cooking styles unique to a given region. The Asian continent is home to some of the world's most favored cuisines - Indian, Chinese and Southeast Asian, to name but a few. The vegetables that these cuisines commonly make use of, differ as well. Take a look at the Asian root vegetables list: black cumin seeds, lotus root, turmeric, Chinese artichoke, daikon (East Asian radish), Chinese water chestnut, and galangal.

Nutrients

Root vegetables are typically high in nutritional value, as a result of their function as energy storage in a plant. Many form staples as a result of their high starch and carbohydrate content. Potatoes, for example, have been used for many years as the cereal component in colder climates where conditions limit the growth of other cereals like rice, corn and wheat.

Adapted from <http://www.buzzle.com> by [Tilottama Chatterjee](#), 9/4/2010

Roasted Beet, Pistachio and Pear Salad

2 beets, about $\frac{3}{4}$ pound (canned beets may be substituted)
1 cup diced asian pear or ripe pear
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced celery
2 T. chopped pistachios
3 T. fresh lemon juice
1 T. honey
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Black pepper
Dash sea salt
Dash of ground red pepper
Curly leaf lettuce or shredded romaine lettuce (optional)

Roast and prepare Beets. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Leave root and 1 inch of stem on beets. Scrub with a brush. (Reserve greens for stir fries or as a sautéed greens side dish.) Place beets in a small baking dish, wrap in aluminium foil. Bake at 425 degrees for 50 minutes or until tender. Cool. Trim off beet roots, rub off skins. Dice beets. Combine beets, pear, celery and pistachios in a medium bowl. Combine juice, honey, sugar, peppers and salt. Mix well with a whisk. Drizzle over beet mixture, tossing gently to coat. Serve at room temperature or chilled on lettuce leaves.

Pomegranate-Glazed Carrots

1 T olive oil
1 pound carrots, cut diagonally into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slices
1 cup pomegranate juice
1 3-inch cinnamon stick
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp black pepper
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp coriander seeds, toasted and lightly crushed

Heat oil in a 10" heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot, but not smoking. Add carrots and sauté, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes. Add pomegranate juice, cinnamon stick, salt, and pepper and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until carrots are tender and liquid is reduced to a glaze, 20-25 minutes. Add coriander seeds and cook, stirring 1 minute. Discard cinnamon stick and serve carrots hot or at room temperature.