

Parsnips in the Classroom

Rocks to Parsnips: Understanding the Food System

Connecting food to geology

Students will learn how erosion and decomposition play a major role in getting food to our table.

How do we get parsnips from rocks?

Students solve the riddle by starting with a rock and discussing what happens to the rock over time, and establishing that rocks form the basis of all soil. From there, they examine the path from seed to fork, acknowledging the role of the farmer (producer), cook, and eater (consumer). Students can also trace the path back from parsnips to soil by examining the role of decomposition in soil building.

For the full lesson plan, head to farmtoschool.tbaisd.org

Did You Know?

- The scientific name for parsnips is *Pastinaca sativa*.
- The parsnip is a member of the Apiaceae family, as are carrots, celery, fennel and parsley. Pale and cream-colored, parsnips closely resemble carrots with their long tuberous root that matures below ground and its tall mop of green leaves on top.

Interested in volunteering with farm to school activities?

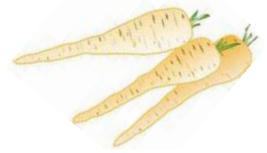
Sign up for our volunteer newsletter at:

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January Harvest of the Month

Parsnips



Parsnip recipes and fun facts inside!



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FARM to SCHOOL
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Extension

Parsnip-Potato Mash Recipe

Prep time: 8 min
Cook time: 20-30 minutes
Estimated Cost: \$5-7
Serves six as a side dish.

Ingredients:

1 pound parsnips
1 pound russet potatoes
4 tbsp butter
1 tsp fresh thyme
1/2 cup whole milk
salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

Rinse and peel parsnips and potatoes. Chop into 1" chunks.

Place peeled and chopped parsnips and potatoes into a large saucepan. Cover with cold water, until the water is 1" above the vegetables (approximately three cups).

Bring to a boil, cover and reduce to a simmer. Cook until parsnips and potatoes are very tender and fall apart easily, about 20 minutes.

Drain parsnips and potatoes using a colander. Place drained parsnips and potatoes in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment (or large mixing bowl if mashing by hand).

Turn mixer on to low, add 4 tbsp butter to warm parsnips and potatoes. Slowly add the milk, mixing until it is incorporated. Add thyme, and continue mixing until the parsnips and potatoes reach desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper and serve!



Parsnip Buyer's Tip

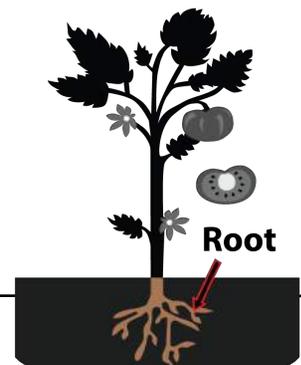
Choose a parsnip as you would a carrot: firm, not limp, and select small or medium sizes over large, to avoid a woody core. They should feel heavy for their size, with knobby heads and fleshy forms that taper to a long root end. Store unwashed and untrimmed parsnips in a plastic bag lined with a paper towel, which wicks away any trapped moisture and keeps the roots fresh longer. They will keep in the refrigerator for up to three weeks.



Fun Facts About Parsnips

Plant Parts

- Parsnips are root vegetables, which means the part of the plant we eat grows underground!
- Parsnips take a long time to grow- they can spend anywhere from six to nine months between planting and harvest.



Origins

- During the Middle Ages, before the introduction of the potato and when sugar and honey were scarce and expensive, this sweet, starchy crop did double duty in Europe: it was a staple vegetable and a sweetener.
- Parsnips are sweetest after a frost- the cold helps convert their starches to sugars and adds a sweet, nutty flavor.



Nutrition

- Parsnips are a good source of dietary fiber — a half-cup serving provides 11 percent of daily recommended fiber.
- Parsnips contain a unique blend of antioxidants- a single serving of parsnips packs 17 percent daily value of the antioxidant vitamin C and 11 percent DV of the heart-healthy B vitamin, folate.



Looking for local parsnips?

Visit localdifference.org to search for local food, farms, and retailers.