

Naturally Nutritious Blog

HEALTH & WELLNESS



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Rooting for Root Vegetables

What do potatoes, radishes, beets, onions, ginger, parsnips, carrots, and rutabaga have in common? They are all subterranean powerhouses, otherwise known as root vegetables. They offer several colors, textures, and flavors lending to plenty of culinary creativity, and are known for their health benefits and their ability to store nutrients. They are generally low in calories and high in antioxidants and fiber, making them an excellent addition to a healthy diet.

Nutritionally, root vegetables offer a variety of benefits. As a group, they are rich in essential vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, vitamin K, Folate, and fiber and beta carotene in sweet potatoes and carrots.

Like most vegetables, root vegetables are low in calories offering great caloric bang for your buck. Beets, especially red beets, contain a high concentration of naturally occurring nitrates which convert to nitric oxide and can lower blood pressure. The fiber in root vegetables can aid in digestion and help regulate blood sugar levels, while the potassium found in many root vegetables, like potatoes, is vital for heart and muscle function.

Culinary uses for root vegetables are as diverse as their types. While low in calories, they can make meals feel comforting and hearty.

They can be roasted to bring out their natural sweetness, mashed for a comforting side dish, or added to soups and stews for extra flavor and nutrition. Sweet potatoes can be cooked nearly any way a potato can be cooked, but also have sweet applications by the ability to be turned into a pie and even turned into brownies! Daikon, a large white radish, is common in Asian cuisines, used raw, pickled, and cooked. Potatoes have endless versatility, but if you're interested in lower calorie swaps, rutabagas and celeriac are the closest alternatives. I could probably write several pages on the culinary uses of root vegetables as they offer unique flavors, textures, colors, and uses individually.

Let's start off with this delicious Beet and Black Bean Burger recipe. Based on packaged, pre-cooked ingredients, this recipe is very easy and quick to pull together. All it requires is a food processor and an oven!



BEET & BLACK BEAN BURGERS



Ingredients:

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| 1 6-7 ounce package of cooked, peeled beets | 1 tsp onion powder |
| 1 package microwavable brown rice and quinoa | 1 tsp smoked paprika |
| 2 15 oz cans low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed | ½ tsp dried dill |
| ½ tsp salt | ¼ tsp ground black pepper |
| 1 tsp garlic powder | 4 ounces feta, crumbled |



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. In a food processor, add beets and run on high until finely chopped.
3. Add remaining ingredients except for feta cheese and run food processor on low until well combined.
4. Add feta cheese and pulse a few times.
5. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with oil. Using a large scoop, divide mixture into 12 portions on the parchment paper.
6. Spray each portion with cooking oil and the back side of a spatula. Use the back of the spatula to flatten the scoops into patties.
7. Bake the burgers for 20-25 minutes until lightly crispy on top.

Recipe Notes:

I like these burgers either on a whole wheat bun with traditional toppings or on their own with a spicy sauce or Greek yogurt on top. You can play around with the seasoning, make them spicy, or use different herbs. It's a versatile and adaptable recipe.

In summary, root vegetables are a nutritious group of foods that offer a variety of health benefits and culinary uses. From boosting your vitamin intake to providing a comforting and satisfying meal, they are a valuable addition to any diet. Whether you're looking to improve your health or simply enjoy some delicious and hearty dishes, root vegetables are definitely worth digging into.

Note: Since everyone's health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that's right for you.

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