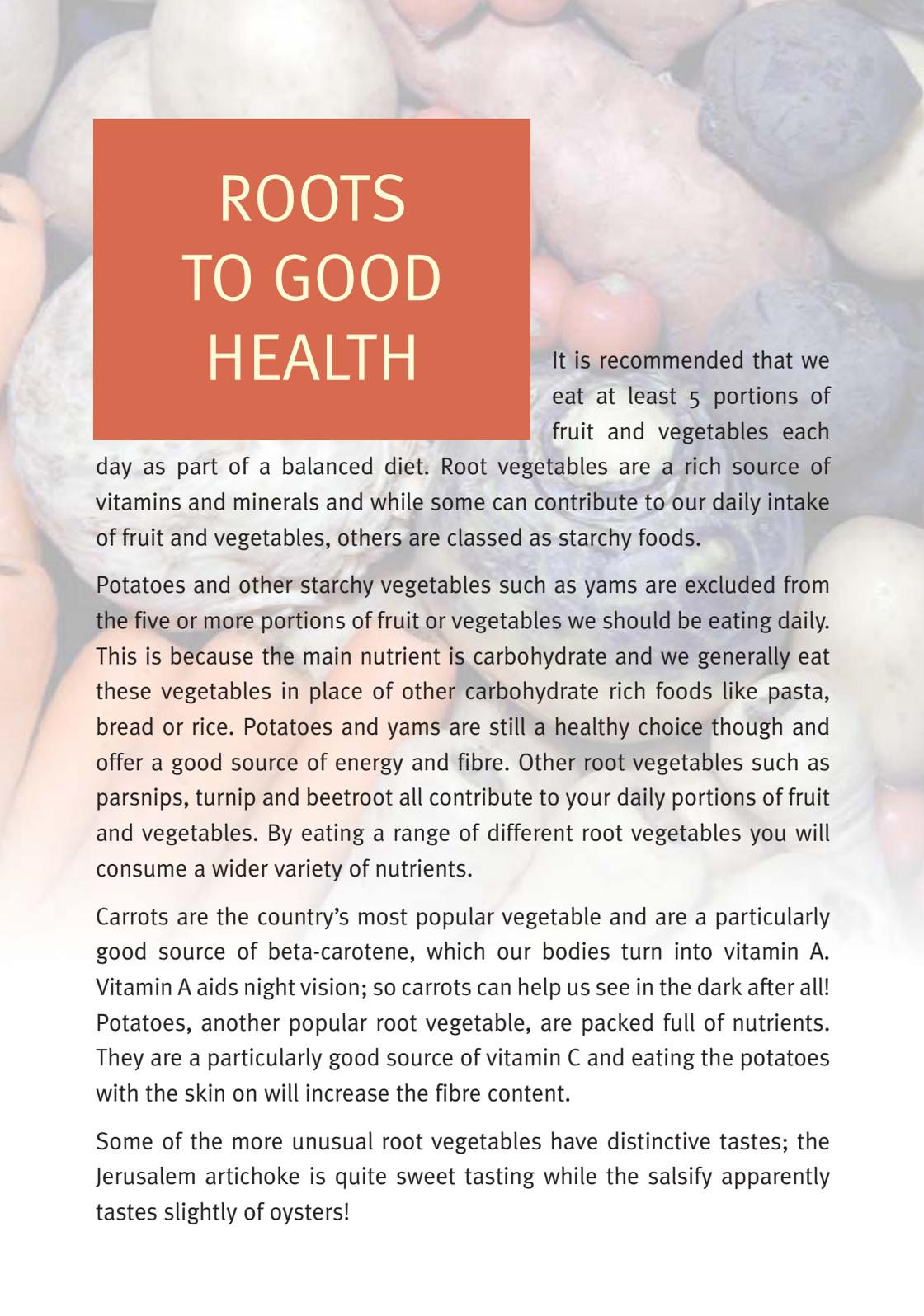


WHAT ABOUT ROOTS?

Root vegetables are fleshy, edible, underground roots or tubers. For many the most familiar root vegetables are: potatoes, carrots, turnips, swedes, beetroots, radishes and parsnips, although there are many more worth getting to know, such as sweet potatoes and cassava.

Growing seasons vary between different types of root vegetables and even between different varieties of the same vegetable. Most root vegetables are available in Scotland all year round. Roots can be cooked and prepared in a variety of ways; baked, mashed, roasted, grated and boiled, making a delicious accompaniment to a meal, while some can even be served raw and added to salads for extra flavour.

With many root vegetables being so inexpensive and versatile, they are a convenient source of vitamins and minerals, making them a great healthy choice.



ROOTS TO GOOD HEALTH

It is recommended that we eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each

day as part of a balanced diet. Root vegetables are a rich source of vitamins and minerals and while some can contribute to our daily intake of fruit and vegetables, others are classed as starchy foods.

Potatoes and other starchy vegetables such as yams are excluded from the five or more portions of fruit or vegetables we should be eating daily. This is because the main nutrient is carbohydrate and we generally eat these vegetables in place of other carbohydrate rich foods like pasta, bread or rice. Potatoes and yams are still a healthy choice though and offer a good source of energy and fibre. Other root vegetables such as parsnips, turnip and beetroot all contribute to your daily portions of fruit and vegetables. By eating a range of different root vegetables you will consume a wider variety of nutrients.

Carrots are the country's most popular vegetable and are a particularly good source of beta-carotene, which our bodies turn into vitamin A. Vitamin A aids night vision; so carrots can help us see in the dark after all! Potatoes, another popular root vegetable, are packed full of nutrients. They are a particularly good source of vitamin C and eating the potatoes with the skin on will increase the fibre content.

Some of the more unusual root vegetables have distinctive tastes; the Jerusalem artichoke is quite sweet tasting while the salsify apparently tastes slightly of oysters!

ROOTS TO GREAT TASTES

Through habit we can often end up buying or growing the same types of vegetables. Why not explore the versatility of root vegetables using these recipes.

All recipes serve four.

SALAD OF GRATED BEETS, CARROT & RADISH

- ▶ 2 BEETROOTS, WASHED, PEELED & GRATED
- ▶ 2 CARROTS, WASHED, PEELED & GRATED
- ▶ 1 BUNCH RADISHES, WASHED & TRIMMED
- ▶ 1 BUNCH WATERCRESS, WASHED & STALKS TRIMMED
- ▶ THE JUICE OF 1 LEMON
- ▶ 1 TSP HONEY
- ▶ 2 TSPS SESAME SEEDS

- In a large bowl combine all ingredients.
- Ideally set aside for 30mins to allow flavours to develop.

Serving suggestion: with wholemeal bread/baked potatoes or as accompaniment to a main meal.

PARSNIP, CARROT & CORIANDER SOUP

- ▶ SUNFLOWER OIL (FOR BRUSHING PAN)
- ▶ 1 LARGE ONION, PEELED & CHOPPED
- ▶ 3 MEDIUM PARSNIPS, PEELED & CHOPPED
- ▶ 3 MEDIUM CARROTS, PEELED & CHOPPED
- ▶ FRESH CORIANDER, CHOPPED (APPROX 1TBLSP) OR DRIED (1½ TBLSP)
- ▶ FRESHLY MILLED PEPPER
- ▶ 560MLS LIGHT BOUILLON/CHICKEN STOCK

- Brush a pan with a little oil and add all vegetables. Stir.
- Take a piece of greaseproof paper large enough to cover diameter of pan, wet with

cold water and scrunch over sink.

- Place the moist crumpled paper on top of vegetables and place lid on pan.
- Sweat over a medium heat for 5 mins. The vegetables will partially cook in the steam and retain all their moisture and flavour.
- Remove paper and add remaining ingredients.
- Simmer for 10mins until vegetables are soft. Adjust consistency if necessary by adding additional water.
- Liquidise or not depending on preference to give a smooth or chunky soup – or a mix of the two.

Serving suggestion: With wholemeal bread.

MEDLEY OF ROASTED ROOTS

- ▶ 2 PARSNIPS
- ▶ 2 CARROTS
- ▶ 2 BEETROOTS
- ▶ 1 BUNCH RADISHES
- ▶ FRESHLY MILLED PEPPER
- ▶ A FEW SPRIGS OF ROSEMARY
- ▶ 10MLS (1DSTSP) OLIVE OIL

- Pre-heat oven 180 °C (Gas 4).
- Wash vegetables in cold running water and peel. Leave radishes whole and unpeeled.
- Cut remaining roots into chunky sticks.
- Scatter in a roasting tin. Drizzle very lightly with oil. Add pepper. Shake in tin to mix together.
- Oven-roast for 30mins/until golden and curled at edges. Vegetables should be cooked through (tender) but not over-soft.

Serving suggestion: As an accompaniment to a main meal e.g. to accompany roast chicken.

ROOTS & FRUITS COUSCOUS

- ▶ 10MLS(1 DSTSP) SUNFLOWER OIL
- ▶ 2 MEDIUM CARROTS, PEELED & CUT IN SMALL STICKS
- ▶ 1 ONION, PEELED & SLICED
- ▶ 2 MEDIUM PARSNIPS, PEELED & CUT IN SMALL STICKS
- ▶ 50G DRIED FRUITS –SULTANAS/APRICOTS/ DATES, CHOPPED ROUGHLY
- ▶ PINCH OF PAPRIKA
- ▶ 1TSP MIXED HERBS
- ▶ FRESHLY MILLED BLACK PEPPER
- ▶ 225G COUSCOUS

▶ APPROX.150MLS CHICKEN/LIGHT BOUILLON STOCK

- Pre heat oven 180 °C (Gas no4).
- Season vegetables, place on baking tray. Drizzle with oil, seasoning and herbs.
- Roast uncovered for 10mins until tender, depending on thickness of sticks.
- To prepare couscous, follow instructions on the packet using the chicken stock as the liquid. When ready, combine with cooked vegetables and fruits.

Serving suggestion: Eat hot or cold as a light meal.

STORAGE AND PREPARATION

Storing vegetables successfully depends on the vegetables being unblemished and unwashed. Washing vegetables prior to storing can actually accelerate their deterioration.

Not all root vegetables need refrigerated; potatoes in particular should not be refrigerated, but instead stored in a cool, dry and dark place. Other root vegetables will keep well in the fridge for 2-3 weeks. If you buy your root vegetables from the supermarket, ready washed and or pre cut, then it is best to store them in the refrigerator.

TOP TIP – It's not only the root of the vegetable that can be eaten. The leaves of some roots e.g. radish and beetroot can be added to salads. The leaves are best when eaten young. Any leaves should be removed from the vegetables and put in a plastic bag before putting them in the refrigerator.

For some variety why not try juicing some roots for a delicious fresh drink. Carrots, beetroots and radishes are some of the more common roots used for juicing. Beetroot juice can be very strong; it is advisable to dilute it.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Growing root vegetables can be an excellent means of getting exercise, feeling better, making friends, saving money, eating better and improving not only your health but also your environment!

You can grow on any scale, from a corner of your back garden, to an allotment and many

of the smaller root vegetables can be grown indoors.

If you are new to growing you will find no shortage of agencies, and probably a few neighbours, with lots of helpful advice and hints.



Want to find out more?

The Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme has a range of recipes from their Award winners and further information for caterers wanting to offer 'healthy choices'.

www.shcas.co.uk

The Scottish Community Diet Project supports low income communities tackling inequalities in food and health.

www.dietproject.org.uk

Visit the Scottish Executive's Healthyliving Campaign website for all the latest information on the campaign, healthy eating tips, recipes, meal ideas and much more.

www.healthyliving.gov.uk/

The Food Standards Agency has a whole range of information on food and nutrition; they even have a specific page on root vegetables.

www.foodstandards.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/rootveg

The BBC food website has some information on root vegetables

www.bbc.co.uk/food/backtobasics/rootveg.shtml

Useful information on growing vegetables can be found at:

The National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

www.farmgarden.org.uk;

Thrive www.thrive.org.uk;

Garden Action www.gardenaction.co.uk

and the Scottish Allotment and Gardeners Society

www.sags.org.uk/index.php4



SCOTTISH
Healthy Choices
AWARD



Scottish Community
Diet Project

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www.dietproject.org.uk



healthyliving