



Zion Farmers Market KidCraft

Mr. Turnip Head



We all know and love the goofy plastic potato known as Mr. Potato Head. But did you know that the toy originally involved sticking plastic facial features with spiky ends into a real potato?

"Any fruit or vegetable makes a funny face man," reads the package to the original Mr. Potato Head, first marketed nationally in 1952. That's right, you didn't even need to stick those facial features into a potato. Any fruit, vegetable, or sibling's arm would suffice!

Here's a fun variation that uses a turnip instead of a potato.

Supplies

- Construction paper or felt
- Small to medium sized turnip
- Pencil
- Tape
- Straight pins
- Pipe cleaners
- Scissors

Instructions

Draw eyes, nose, mouth and hand shapes on your felt or construction paper.

Cut out shapes and affix to turnip with pins or tape. Create arms from pipe cleaners. Attach hands.

The sky is the limit with this project! And, when you're done playing, you can cook and eat your creation.

Turnip Facts for Kids

Well, hello. Thanks for dropping by. We know we're not the most popular vegetable today, but we used to be very popular in the past. Maybe it's just a matter of fashion, but we're sure that if you just give us another chance you'll find out just how tasty we really are. Let me tell you more about us.

For a start we're a root vegetable related to radishes and mustards. We have a cylindrical, carrot or top-shape, with a flat top and a root which tapers to a point. Our skin is almost smooth and can be green, or white with green or purple bands at the top. Our leaves can be eaten as a leafy vegetable. Our flesh colour is white or yellow with a delicious, tender and sweet flavour.

Availability

We're available all year round with our peak being from May to October.

Did you know?

Both our roots and leaves can be eaten. Our root has a strong flavour, but is milder and sweeter when we're small and young.

Varieties

We're not sold by variety.

Why Turnips are Good to Eat

- We're high in vitamin C and are a good source of dietary fibre (especially our leaves or 'turnip tops')
- Our tops are rich in beta carotene, vitamin E and folate (one of the B vitamins).
- We're a good source of potassium.

How Turnips are Grown and Harvested

We prefer a colder climate and are grown from seeds which take 1-2 months to mature.

Our swollen carrot-like taproot sits in the ground with just the top exposed to the light. Our green leaves, consisting of a main leaf stem with smaller leaflets, grows out of the top of our root.

We're harvested by being pulled or dug from the ground, before being washed and graded for market.

Choosing Turnips

Select those of us which are firm, feel heavy for our size and have a sweet smell.

How to Keep Turnips

Refrigerate us in the crisper section. Use within 2 weeks.

History of Turnips

We are descended from the wild turnip, which is native to Central Asia, the Mediterranean and the Near East. We were known to the Romans but were used as food long before the rise of their empire.

In England we were recorded as being for sale in the 16th century. From England we came out with the First Fleet to Australia in 1787, being planted on Norfolk Island shortly after the colonists arrival in 1788. We were an important crop because of our rapid growth and the fact that we could be used as both human and stock feed.

Fun Ways to Eat and Cook Turnips

Remove our green tops and cook us as a vegetable, like spinach. Our bulbs should be washed, peeled and chopped. Thinly sliced or grated, we're a delicious addition to salads. If small we may be cooked whole with skin left on.

Boil, bake, microwave or stir-fry us until tender, about 6-10 minutes if chopped, 15-20 minutes if left whole. Serve us as a vegetable, stuffed or add us to casseroles, soups, souffles or mousse. Because we can absorb large quantities of fat we're often served with fatty meat.