



## Zion Farmers Market Veg-u-cation

### Terrific Turnip



Enjoyed since ancient times, the turnip is a round, apple-sized root vegetable from the Brassicaceae family. It's white at the bottom with a light purple blush around the top, which appears when the plant has been exposed to sunlight. Native to northern Europe, turnip was a staple of ancient Greek and Roman diets. Roman author and philosopher Pliny the Elder described the turnip as "one of the most important vegetables" of his time.

Turnips thrive best in cold weather and grow up to two feet high, with long and slender hairy leaves. You can buy them all year long, but are enjoyed best during fall and spring, when they are small and sweet. "Baby turnips" – small, young, all-white turnips that have been harvested early in the growing stage – are a favorite of many people, as they are delicate and sweet, frequently added raw to vegetable salads. The larger the turnip, the woodier its taste becomes.

Like other root vegetables, turnips are a great storage vegetable that you can stock before winter arrives. When buying this root crop, make sure to look for firm and heavy roots that have a smooth skin, a sweet aroma, and crisp green tops.

Turnips taste bland, like a cross between a carrot and a potato. Even so, they have plenty of uses in the kitchen. Add them raw to your salads, or mix with cherry tomatoes and olives to make a delicious appetizer. You can also mix them in stews along with vegetables like potatoes, carrots, and kohlrabi.

Before cooking or serving turnip, make sure you clean it thoroughly by scrubbing the skin with a vegetable brush under running water. It has a great crunch and texture, so make sure not to overcook.

Another tip: don't throw away the leafy green tops – they are actually more nutritious than the roots, and are teeming with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

### ***Health Benefits of Turnip***

Turnip is a great source of minerals, antioxidants, and dietary fiber. It is also a low-calorie vegetable – a 100 gram serving only has 28 calories. Surprisingly, it's also loaded with immune-boosting vitamin C, with 21 milligrams per 100 grams, which is 35 percent of the recommended daily amount (RDA). Vitamin C is essential to your body for collagen synthesis as well as for scavenging free radicals, which may cause cancer and inflammation linked to various diseases.

The leafy green tops are more nutritionally dense than the crunchy white roots. They are rich in

free radical-scavenging antioxidants like vitamins A and C, carotenoids, xanthin, and lutein. The leaves are also an excellent source of vitamin K, a direct regulator of the inflammatory response, and omega-3 acids like alpha linolenic acid (ALA), which are the building blocks for your body's anti-inflammatory molecules.

Turnip greens also contain B vitamins (riboflavin, folates, pyridoxine, pantothenic acid, and thiamin), calcium, copper, manganese, and iron, as well as phytonutrients like quercetin, myricetin, kaempferol, and hydroxycinnamic acid, which help lower your risk of oxidative stress.



### ***Turnip Fun Facts***

Did you know that turnip is good for personal hygiene, too? In fact, turnip juice is actually effective in warding off body odor. Grate a turnip, squeeze out the juice, and then apply it to your underarms.

Turnip can also help mend cracked and torn skin on your feet. Simply boil at least 12 turnips, including their greens, in water. Before bedtime, soak your feet in this solution (let it cool first) for 10 minutes. You can also rub the turnips on the soles of your feet. Continue for three days, and you'll notice your skin becoming smoother and softer than before.

### ***Summary***

If you're looking for a hardy, cool-weathered root crop to store before winter arrives, look no further: turnip certainly fits the bill. Loaded with vitamins A, C, K, and even omega-3 fatty acids and cancer-fighting plant compounds, turnips are a healthful vegetable to add to your diet. Don't forget the leafy green tops – they are actually more nutritionally dense than the crispy white root. Indeed, the turnip is just as valuable today as it was as two millennia ago when Pliny the Elder described it as one of the most important vegetables of his time.

Although it's not as flavorful as other vegetables, this unique white and purple root crop is versatile and can be used in a vast array of dishes. From crunchy appetizers and salads to rich soups and stews, turnip can augment your favorite recipes with its subtle flavor. Just make sure not to overcook it. You want it to retain its trademark crunchiness.

