

Turn to the • turnip

Add white to the rainbow of produce you eat

By MELISSA D'ARABIAN
Photos by MATTHEW MEAD
Associated Press

I talk to my kids every day about eating a rainbow of produce in order to get all the nutrients they need. But you know what color is left out of the rainbow? White.

That is, at least according to my 7-year-old twins when I presented cauliflower to them at the dinner table. What a shame. Have we lost all the love for the contributions of white veggies like onions and cauliflower and all their good-for-you nutrients?

So what better time than winter to celebrate an oft-overlooked white veggie — the turnip! The turnip is misunderstood and passed over all too quickly. Raw, its flavor is sharp, even un-

pleasant. But as it cooks the turnip softens into a milder, earthy, slightly sweet flavor.

Nutritionally speaking, the turnip is a rock star. A large turnip has only 50 calories, but is jam packed with vitamin C, as well as smaller amounts of all sorts of other nutrients. And turnips are a two-for-one veggie, meaning you buy the root and you get the turnip greens for free.

Don't throw those greens away. They are nutritional powerhouses, too! Wash them, chop them, then saute, steam or braise them as you would any other green. And dunking them in a pot of boiling water for a minute helps remove the bitter taste.

Despite all this great news, outside of pockets of regional turnip lovers, most Americans don't turn to the turnip very of-

ten. A helpful strategy for including turnips at the novice's table is to pair it with a fellow root veggie. A good way to do this is to combine them in a hash, puree or soup, such as in this roasted garlic, turnip and sweet potato soup.

Tucking into a bowl of veggie-based soup is not only a great health move, it's also a perfect way to begin a comforting wintery meal. Enjoy the turnip soup as is, or use it as inspiration to match your favorite flavor profile, by adding curry powder, smoked paprika or even orange zest and cumin.

.....
Food Network star Melissa d'Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the cookbook "Supermarket Healthy." <http://www.melissadarabian.net>



Turnips are a nutritional rock star — don't pass them over this winter.



Garnish the soup with plain, low-fat Greek yogurt and scallions.

Roasted Garlic, Turnip and Sweet Potato Soup

1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced
1 large turnip, peeled and diced
3 tablespoons olive oil
8 cloves garlic, whole and peeled
2 shallots, sliced
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
1/4 cup white wine
Salt and ground black pepper
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1/2 cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt
Chopped chives or scallions, for garnish

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with foil and mist with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine the sweet potato and turnip. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Spread the sweet potatoes and turnip in an even layer on the prepared baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in the same bowl, toss the garlic, shallots and thyme with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil. After the sweet potatoes and turnip have roasted for 15 minutes, use a spatula to turn the pieces.

Add the garlic and shallot mixture to the pan, then roast for another 20 minutes.

4. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine the stock and wine and bring to a gentle simmer. Add the roasted vegetable mixture and simmer until the sweet potatoes are very tender, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat. Working in batches if necessary, transfer the mixture to a blender. Using caution when blending hot liquids, blend until smooth.

5. Return the soup to the pan and re-heat for several minutes, if needed, over medium. Stir in the vinegar, then season with salt and pepper. Add water if soup is too thick. Ladle the soup into serving bowls, top each serving with a bit of yogurt and chives or scallions.

.....
Nutrition information per serving:
140 calories; 70 calories from fat
(50 percent of total calories); 8 g
fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats);
5 mg cholesterol; 13 g carbo-
hydrate; 2 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 4 g
protein; 270 mg sodium.