



Using, Storing and Preserving



Rutabagas

Written by:

Katherine E. Hale, MSU Extension Educator

Michigan-grown rutabagas are available late September through November.

Revised by:

Kara Lynch, MSU Extension Educator

Michigan Fresh: Using, Storing and Preserving Rutabagas was first published in October 2012 and revised in June 2023.

Food Safety and Storage

- Pick or purchase rutabagas that are not bruised or damaged.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Wash rutabagas under cool running water using a vegetable brush before peeling. Do not use soap.
- Look for smooth, firm vegetables with a round shape. Avoid rutabagas with punctures, deep cuts, cracks or signs of decay. They usually are trimmed of taproots and tops before they are sold to the public.
- Harvest when they reach the size of a softball. You may harvest rutabagas as they reach edible size and throughout the season since they will keep in the ground.
- Rutabagas will keep for months in a cool storage place. They store well in plastic bags in a refrigerator or cold cellar.
- Keep rutabagas away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- For best quality and to preserve nutrients, preserve no more than your family can consume in one year.



How to Preserve

Preparation: Select young, medium-sized rutabagas. Cut off tops, wash using cool water and a vegetable brush, and peel.

Rutabagas are best frozen. *Michigan State University Extension does not recommend canning rutabagas* as they usually discolor and develop a strong flavor.

Freezing

Cubed. Freeze by cutting into cubes and water blanch* for 3 minutes. Place in ice water for 3 minutes, drain and pack into freezer containers or freezer bags, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

***Water blanching:** Use 1 gallon of water per pound of rutabagas. Put rutabagas in blanching basket or strainer, and lower into boiling water. Place lid on pan or blancher. Return water to boil. Start counting blanching time as soon as water returns to a boil. If it takes longer than a minute to come back to a boil, too much rutabaga has been put in the boiling water.

Mashed: Cut into chunks and cook until tender in boiling water. Then drain, mash, cool and pack into freezer containers leaving ½-inch headspace. Label and place in freezer.

Yield:

1 medium	=	(2 to 3 lbs.) 5 cups cubed
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Lawn or garden questions?

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Recipes

Baked rutabagas

Place 1 to 3 pounds quartered and peeled rutabagas in a shallow baking dish. Cover and bake in a 350 °F oven until tender, usually 40 to 50 minutes. Mix with carrots and parsnips for a great fall bake.

Sources

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