



Radishes!

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Radishes are members of the mustard (*Brassicaceae*) family, and their name comes from *radix*, the Latin word for root. Cultivated for thousands of years across Asia and Europe.

Radishes are famous for their rapid growth, often going from seed to table in less than a month. While traditionally eaten raw in salads, they can also be roasted, pickled, sautéed or even grown strictly for their edible seed pods and leafy greens.

Growing

Radishes grow best in fertile, well-drained soils. Compost may be added to improve fertility and loosen the soil structure. The finest quality radishes are grown under cool, moist conditions. Sow seeds from early spring through mid-May, and again in late summer for a fall crop.

Sow seeds about 1 inch apart, ½ inch deep, in rows 12 inches apart. Thin seeds to 2 inches apart. Seeds may be sown at 10- to 14-day intervals to provide a steady supply of tender roots throughout the cool seasons. Irrigate regularly to produce smooth, mild roots; uneven watering or drought causes radishes to become woody.

Harvesting

Harvest radishes promptly when roots reach 1 inch in diameter. Allowing them to remain in the ground too long results in a spongy, pithy texture. Pull plants by the base of the leaves.

Nutrition

One cup of sliced radishes has 20 calories, 0 grams (g) of fat, 0 g of protein, 4 g of carbohydrates, 2 g of fiber and 45 milligrams of sodium. Radishes also provide vitamin C, potassium and calcium.

Storage

Remove the green tops immediately after harvest to prevent them from drawing moisture out of the roots. Wash roots thoroughly under cold water to remove the soil. Store clean, dry radishes in a plastic bag in the most humid part of the fridge, usually the crisper drawer.

Preparing

Wash radishes thoroughly with a vegetable brush under cold running water just before preparing. Radishes are most commonly served raw, either sliced into salads or added to vegetable platters. You can also cook radishes with olive oil, salt and pepper and roast them at 400 F until tender and sweet.

Preservation

Freezing: Blanch radishes for two to three minutes to preserve color. Cool quickly and then spread on a cookie sheet to freeze individually before transferring to containers or freezer bags. Roasted radishes can also be frozen for later use in meals.

Pickling: Make a brine with water, salt, vinegar and sugar. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring until the sugar and salt dissolve, then simmer for 10-15 minutes to allow the flavors to meld. Pack a clean, dry jar with a two-piece lid with sliced radishes and onion. Pour the brine into the jar, leaving ½ inch of headspace at the top. Screw the lids onto the jars and process them in a pressure canner for 10-15 minutes.



Recipes



Rosemary and Thyme Roasted Radishes with Greek Yogurt

3 whole medium-sized radishes
Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil (about 2 teaspoons)

Sprinkle of thyme
Sprinkle of rosemary
Pinch of salt, optional

Serve with plain skyr or nonfat Greek yogurt and minced chives (about 2 tablespoons per serving)

On a sheet pan lined with parchment paper, toss radishes with a bit of extra virgin olive oil, thyme, chopped rosemary and a pinch of salt. Roast in the oven at 350 F for about 45 minutes. Serve with skyr and fresh chives.

Each serving (three radishes with 2 Tbsp. yogurt and no added salt) has 100 calories, 9 grams (g) fat, 3 g of protein, 11 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 20 milligrams sodium.



Fresh Radish Slaw

1 ½ cups radishes, thinly sliced
½ poblano pepper, thinly sliced
1-2 limes, juiced
¼ cup cilantro, chopped
3 green onions, chopped
2 tablespoons honey
Ground black pepper, to taste

Cut the radishes in half and thinly slice; do the same with the poblano pepper. Juice the limes into a bowl, add the cilantro, green onions, honey and ground black pepper and mix well. Add sliced radishes and poblano peppers and toss to coat evenly.

Makes 4 servings. Each serving has 40 calories, 3 grams (g) fat, 1g protein, 28 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber and 24 milligrams sodium.



Roasted Radish and White Bean Salad

1 pound radishes, washed, stemmed and sliced in half
2 tablespoons olive oil (or your favorite cooking oil), divided
Salt and pepper (to taste)
1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
Juice of ½ lemon
⅛ teaspoon garlic powder (or to taste)
¼ cup fresh parsley, stemmed and chopped
2 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

Preheat the oven to 450 F. In a large mixing bowl, toss the radish halves with 1 tablespoon olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Place the seasoned radishes on a baking pan or in a cast-iron skillet. Roast for 20 minutes, tossing occasionally, until tender and caramelized. While the radishes are roasting, place the cannellini beans in the same mixing bowl and add 1 tablespoon olive oil, lemon juice and garlic powder. Season with salt and pepper to taste. When the radishes are done roasting, add them to the bowl with the beans and add parsley. Sprinkle with feta cheese and adjust seasonings, as necessary. Serve warm.

Makes eight servings. Without added salt, each serving has 120 calories, 5 grams (g) fat, 6 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber and 190 milligrams sodium.

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