

Variety With Root Vegetables

ROOT vegetables should be a major constituent of New Zealand meals, and on their preparation and cooking depends very largely whether their great nutritive values are retained. The following kitchen hints and recipes, reprinted from a bulletin issued by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture, should contain some useful ideas for housewives in this country.

BEETROOT . . . carrots . . . turnips, white, yellow, purple-topped . . . parsnips . . . green spring onions, brown and silver-skinned onions—these vegetables bring vitamins, minerals, starches, and sugars to help supply the body's needs.

When the Saucepan Boils

To make the most of minerals, vitamins, and flavour . . .

Start root vegetables in boiling salted water . . . about 1 teaspoon of salt to a quart of water.

With young tender roots use only enough water to prevent sticking to the pan. For older roots have enough water to cover.

Boil root vegetables whole in their skins unless too strong or tough.

If peel you must, make the peelings thin, or scrape no more than skin deep.

To keep beetroot from losing its bright red, leave on the long taproot and an inch or two of stems. A quick dip into cold water loosens the jacket on a cooked beetroot so it slips off like a glove.

To speed cooking time . . . save fuel . . . conserve vitamins, cover the saucepan. If not overcooked, even onions and turnips are not too strong flavoured.

Slice or dice to cut cooking time more.

To bring out their best cook root vegetables only until tender. Don't overcook.

Serve in their own juice, or if too much, use right away in soup, sauce, gravy, or vegetable cocktail.

Season to Taste

Easiest way to season a plain-cooked hot vegetable is to add salt and pepper to taste and a little dripping or melted fat, just before serving.

Or some like a little milk added at the last minute to cooked carrots, turnips, or onions.

To give more "lift" now and then, drop in a little chopped onion, green onion tops, parsley, or chives.

A little vinegar or a squeeze or two of lemon juice adds a pleasantly sour note to seasoning for boiled carrots, beetroot, or turnips.

Be "Saucy" Now and Then

White sauce blends well with plain-cooked onions, carrots, parsnips, or turnips.

For a medium-thick sauce to serve over vegetables blend 3 tablespoons of flour with 3 tablespoons of fat. Add 1½ cups of milk. Cook 5 minutes, stirring constantly to make the sauce

smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. This makes enough sauce to mix with 3 cups of cooked vegetables.

Some vegetables are better with a thin white sauce, made with 2 tablespoons of fat to 2 of flour, for 1½ cups of milk.

Invent your own.—To the white sauce add left-over bits of meat or fish, or hard-boiled egg, or grated cheese.

For a thrifty family-size scalloped dish, combine left-overs of vegetables too small to serve by themselves with a white sauce—plain or fancy. Top with bread crumbs and bake until bubbling and brown.

Recipes which follow are for 6 servings and take about 2lb. of raw vegetables.

BETROOT.

Bulbs and Tops

Cook small beetroot and tops in water until tender (15 or 20 minutes), drain, and chop together. Season with fat, salt, and pepper.

Or use the tops of larger beetroot if they are still crisp and green. They may take longer cooking, but are high in food value.

Harvard Beetroot

1 tablespoon cornstarch or 2 tablespoons flour, 2 to 4 tablespoons sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ cup vinegar, ¼ cup water, 2 tablespoons fat, 3 cups cooked beetroot, sliced.

Mix cornstarch or flour, sugar, and salt. Add vinegar and water and boil 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the fat and beetroot, and let stand until the sauce becomes red. Reheat if necessary.

Beetroot Soup

Here's a quick way to make beetroot soup something like Russian borsch, but using left-overs.

Add finely-chopped cooked beetroot to meat broth, along with chopped cooked onion, carrot, or cabbage. Season with herbs and serve hot. Some like beetroot soup topped with sour cream.

PARSNIPS.

Browned Parsnips

To get rid of the woody core, boil



Watch the pot... don't overcook

GUIDE TO BOILING

Beetroot—young	30-45 minutes
older	60-90 minutes
Carrots—young	15-20 minutes
older	20-25 minutes
Parsnips	20-30 minutes
Onions	30-40 minutes
Turnips	15-20 minutes