

FUTURE 50 FOODS



Root Vegetables
Sprouts
Tubers

50 foods
for healthier
people and a
healthier planet



**FUTURE 50 FOODS IS
THE BEGINNING OF A
JOURNEY AND A WAY
FOR PEOPLE TO MAKE A
CHANGE, ONE DELICIOUS
DISH AT A TIME.**





ROOT VEGETABLES



Root vegetables are the crisp and colourful underground parts of plants that are eaten as vegetables. They often have leafy tops that grow above the ground that should also be eaten to optimise the amount of food these nutritious plants can provide. Root vegetables contain a wide variety of vitamins and minerals and are hardy, cool-season crops. Once harvested, they survive for a relatively long time compared with other vegetables.



Category

Root Vegetables



Black salsify

Scorzonera hispanica

Not widely known, this parsnip-like root vegetable is part of the sunflower family⁵⁰. It is also known as the 'oyster plant' because of its sweet, slightly musky taste. The pale, creamy flesh beneath their thick, dark skin is great to cook with. Salsify is high in fibre and contains vitamin E and iron. It grows well in

cool, temperate climates in countries such as France, the Netherlands and Germany.

It can be boiled, mashed or baked, and served in place of a potato. Similar to carrots and parsnips, black salsify is ideal roasted, and goes well with soups and stews.

Parsley root

Petroselinum crispum

It is said that parsley root first made its appearance in the 15th century as the main ingredient in a Dutch vegetable stew. Known also as Dutch parsley, this taproot vegetable has an aromatic taste somewhere between celeriac, carrot and, inevitably, parsley.

Slim and tapered in shape with beige skin, parsley root looks like parsnip and can grow

up to six inches long. It's great fried as fritters or chips, or grated raw into salads and slaws. Both the taproot and leaves are edible and high in vitamin C.

Popular in the cuisines of Central and Eastern Europe, parsley root is grown all year round in India, China, Vietnam, Nigeria and the Philippines and is resistant to drought.

White icicle radish (winter radish)

Raphanus sativus var. Longipinnatus

In Greek, the word radish can be translated as 'fast appearing' and is certainly true of these white icicle radishes, whose seeds germinate and grow to maturity in under a month. As they deter squash-loving bugs, they're often planted with squash and pumpkins, and can be used as a fallow (or cover) crop to help enrich soil between harvests.

White icicle radishes look like carrots and grow four to six inches long, although their thin skin is cream coloured and their flesh is white. They

have a milder, more peppery taste than their diminutive and more common red cousins. Tasty grilled, braised or roasted, they are also enjoyed grated or sliced fresh into salads, stir-fries, curries and soups to add crunch. In some countries, such as France, they are boiled, coated in oil or butter, lightly spiced and eaten as a side dish. They can also be eaten raw as a snack.

White icicle radishes contain vitamin C and have the benefit of helping with digestion.



SPROUTS

Sprouting dates back 5,000 years when Chinese physicians used sprouts medicinally because of their extremely high nutrient content. The sprouting process doubles, and in some cases triples, the nutritional value of the plant. Seeds and beans need warm and humid conditions to sprout, therefore they carry the risk of bacterial growth. They feature in the Future 50 Foods list because experts agree that, for healthy people, the added nutritional value outweighs the potential risks that can be associated with them*. Sprouts are delicious as a side dish topped with a light dressing or in soups, salads and sandwiches to add a nice crunchy texture.

**If sprouting at home, food safety practices and directions need to be followed. Always wash sprouts thoroughly with cold water and avoid any rotten pieces or parts.*



Category

Sprouts



Alfalfa sprouts

Medicago sativa

Believed to have originated in Iran, alfalfa has been cultivated for thousands of years. Its long growing season, adaptability and ability to enrich soil makes it a farmer's delight. Gaining recent attention from health food enthusiasts, the immature and nutrient-dense alfalfa sprouts are used as an ingredient in a wide variety of dishes, ranging from raw salads to cooked stir-fries and pad thai.

Alfalfa sprouts can be grown industrially or at home in warm, moist conditions. Within one

to two days of watering, the little brown seeds germinate, producing white shoots with pale green leaves that are ready to be eaten. Their crunch and mild flavour make them a great addition to sandwiches and soups. They can also be eaten on their own, topped with a light dressing.

All sprouts grow in similar conditions to bacteria (warm and moist) making them prone to contamination, so food safety practices need to be followed closely.

Sprouted kidney beans

Phaseolus vulgaris

Kidney beans are a popular and versatile source of protein. They make a great substitute for ground meat because of their texture and protein content. The mild flavour makes them the perfect carrier of seasonings and diverse flavours.

It's when sprouted, however, that their nutritional value skyrockets to three times that of unsprouted kidney beans.

Kidney beans are high in lectins, which are complex compounds that are difficult to digest. Therefore, as with all dried beans, especially the larger varieties, it is essential to thoroughly cook kidney bean sprouts by boiling in water or stock for 10 minutes. This will make them taste better and decrease the impact on the digestive system. The slight bitterness pairs well with sweetened sauces or dressings, and they are often used as toppings for soups and salads.

Category

Sprouts



Sprouted chickpeas

Cicer arietinum

Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are small, yellowish round beans originally popular in Middle Eastern dishes. They have recently gained popularity in Western countries, being added to salads and made into spreads, mainly hummus. They have a rich, creamy and nutty flavour. With one cup of chickpeas providing approximately ten grams of protein and a somewhat meaty texture, they are a viable substitute for meat in many dishes. Chickpeas are good for you and sprouted chickpeas are even better. They're also crunchier and have more flavour.

Chickpeas are one of the easiest beans to sprout. Doing so neutralises the phytic acid and allows the body to better absorb the nutrients, such as calcium, magnesium and zinc⁵¹. To sprout chickpeas, soak for eight hours, drain and rinse. Transfer to a glass jar or bowl and cover with a cheesecloth. Repeat the rinse and drain steps a few times until the sprouts are to the desired length. This usually takes three to four days. Like all sprouts, sprouted chickpeas are prone to bacterial growth, so it's important to follow good safety principles.

Add them to stews, soups, stir-fries, or simply enjoy as a side dish. Hummus made from sprouted chickpeas has more crunch and a nuttier flavour than unsprouted chickpeas.








TUBERS

Tubers grow downward, anchoring the plant into the ground, where they absorb and store valuable nutrients for use during the winter or drier months. Typically high in carbohydrates, they are a valuable source of energy. They can be eaten in a huge variety of ways, including boiled, baked, or as a sweetened pudding. White potatoes are the most common type of tuber. Growing and eating the less common types of tubers makes our food system more resilient while, in most circumstances, providing more nutrients.



| | Category | Tubers |  |
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Lotus root

Nelumbo nucifera

The roots of the delicately beautiful lotus flower are incredibly resilient. They can grow and flourish in most bodies of water and replant their own seeds, which can be stored and survive for decades. The oldest examples found in China date back more than 1,000 years and could still be germinated today.

These edible roots have long been treasured as food and for their suspected medicinal properties. High in vitamin C⁵², they have a crunchy texture and a tangy, slightly sweet flavour. A great addition to most dishes where vegetables can be added, they're commonly used in Asian stir-fries, but can also be deep-fried, braised or pickled.

Ube (purple yam)

Dioscorea alata

Ube, a purple yam native to the Philippines, has been increasing in popularity around the world. It is a tuberous-rooted, herbaceous perennial vine that is easily grown. It is more nutritious and grows faster than many other types of yams. Because of this it is known as a 'famine crop' in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world.

Ube is rich in vitamin E and fibre, and has a sweet flavour. Its attractive purple shade comes from the flavonoid anthocyanin⁵³.

In the Philippines ube is often eaten boiled, baked, or as a sweetened pudding called ube halayá. Ube can be prepared in the same way as potatoes. It is sold fresh, cut into cubes, in syrup, puréed or powdered.

Despite its increase in popularity, the space allotted for ube cultivation has declined. This is due to an increase in tourism and real estate on the island of Panglao, where ube has been grown in the past. In other areas it has been replaced with sweet potato or cassava.

Yam bean root (jicama)

Pachyrhizus erosus

There are many benefits to the yam bean root, also known as jicama. It is a high-yield plant that grows easily in both tropical and arid climates. Even in the driest areas it produces 35 tonnes per hectare, reaching up to 75 tonnes per hectare in ideal conditions. This makes jicama a great swap for white potatoes, which yield a maximum of just 25 tonnes per hectare. Growing yam bean also helps to promote soil fertility through nitrogen fixation and it can be grown in rotation with, or alongside, maize and beans. Jicama is a

low-calorie food that is a source of vitamin C and fibre. Its significant water content makes it juicy and refreshing. With a starchy, slightly sweet flavour, it is typically eaten fresh and sliced to add crunch to salads or as a snack. It can be used in place of, or in addition to, other vegetables in stir-fries and is a lower calorie, more nutritious alternative to potato fries or chips.

Note that only the root or tuber part of the yam bean root should be eaten.

Category

Tubers



Red Indonesian (Cilembu) sweet potatoes

Ipomoea batatas

Amongst the vast range of sweet potatoes in the world, one of the most sought after is the Cilembu sweet potato, a variety native to Indonesia. Although the Cilembu sweet potato has been documented since 1914, its unique qualities have only been widely understood since the early 2000s⁵⁴. Sweet potatoes are commonly consumed in a variety of countries, but this type is highly sought after for its flavour and nutritional value.

It is an important commodity in Cilembu and the surrounding villages of Western Java. It is exported to Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. When baked, Cilembu sweet potatoes have a very distinctive aroma and sweet taste with a sugary, honey-like glaze. Not just a culinary delicacy, the Cilembu is also a valuable source of several essential nutrients, including vitamins A, C, E and manganese.

Indonesia has struggled to find enough suitable land to grow the highly coveted Cilembu. As a result, the market has been flooded with similar looking sweet potatoes that are sold intentionally mislabelled under the name Cilembu. These potatoes do not have the honey-sweet flavour of the original, which poses a threat to the Cilembu's ability to stay in circulation. This is why it is currently listed on Slow Food's Ark of Taste⁵⁵. To support its future, specific criteria have been developed to find suitable land to grow this crop to meet consumer demand.

The Future 50 Foods have the power to increase the nutritional value and decrease the environmental impact of

everyday meals. We all need to be a part of shifting the food system by using our purchasing power to increase the demand for and supply of foods that are better for people and the planet. Start by choosing to eat a wider range of foods, including the Future 50 Foods. Large-scale change begins with small actions. To find out more, search [Future 50 Foods](#).



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