

3 Delicious Recipes For Underrated Winter Produce



Forget squash and pumpkins — those quintessential winter fruits and veggies that we often associate with January. There are many [underrated winter fruits and vegetables](#) that have incredible health benefits but are often overlooked. Eating produce that's in season is [more nutritious and better for the planet](#), and these delicious recipes will help you use these underrated winter produce ideas when you meal prep this week!

BREAKFAST: Creamy Persimmon Smoothie

Persimmons, which are in season through to the end of January, contain important antioxidants like beta-carotene and lutein. These antioxidants help neutralize free radicals in your body, reducing oxidative stress and inflammation and lowering the risk of chronic diseases.

Persimmons are also high in dietary fiber, which is essential for digestive health. Fiber can help prevent constipation, promote regular bowel movements, and contribute to overall gut health.

This creamy smoothie pairs the delicious tropical flavors of this underrated winter produce with the wintery flavors of vanilla and cinnamon that's sure to be a crowd pleaser for you and your entire family.

2 ripe persimmons, peeled and chopped
1 banana, peeled
1 cup Greek yogurt (or a dairy-free alternative for a vegan version)
1/2 cup almond milk (or any other milk of your choice)
1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup (optional, depending on your sweetness preference)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Ice cubes (optional)

Wash, peel, and chop the persimmons. Peel the banana.

In a blender, combine the chopped persimmons, banana, Greek yogurt, almond milk, honey or maple syrup (if using), vanilla extract, and ground cinnamon.

Blend the ingredients until you achieve a smooth and creamy consistency. If the smoothie is too thick, you can add more almond milk to reach your desired consistency.

Taste the smoothie and adjust the sweetness or thickness if needed. You can add more honey or maple syrup if you prefer a sweeter taste.

Pour the smoothie into glasses. If desired, add ice cubes to make it extra refreshing.

Garnish with a sprinkle of ground cinnamon on top for an extra touch of flavor and presentation.

Your persimmon smoothie is ready to be enjoyed! It's a delicious and nutritious treat packed with vitamins and antioxidants.

LUNCH: Blanched Rapini Salad

Rapini, also known as broccoli rabe, is a leafy green vegetable with a slightly bitter taste that can add a unique flavor to salads.

The fiber, potassium, and antioxidants in rapini may also contribute to heart health. Fiber helps regulate cholesterol levels, potassium supports blood pressure control, and antioxidants can protect the cardiovascular system from oxidative stress.

This rapini salad is not only vibrant and flavorful and filled with this underrated winter produce, but it is also packed with nutrients. It makes a great side dish for various meals and can be enjoyed on its own or alongside grilled chicken or fish. Feel free to customize the salad by adding other ingredients like toasted pine nuts or avocado for extra texture and taste.

SALAD:

1 bunch of rapini (broccoli rabe), washed and trimmed
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved
1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled (optional)

LEMON VINAIGRETTE DRESSING:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the rapini and blanch for 2-3 minutes, or until it is bright green and slightly tender. Immediately transfer the rapini to a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain and pat dry with a towel.

Chop the blanched rapini into bite-sized pieces. In a large salad bowl, combine the rapini with cherry tomatoes, red onion, Kalamata olives, and feta cheese (if using).

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, salt, and pepper. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

Pour the lemon vinaigrette over the rapini and vegetable mixture. Toss the salad gently to coat the ingredients evenly with the dressing.

Serve the rapini salad immediately, garnishing with additional feta cheese if desired.

DINNER: Rutabaga and Chicken Sheet Pan Dinner

Some compounds in rutabaga, including glucosinolates, have anti-inflammatory properties. Reduced inflammation is associated with various health benefits and may help prevent chronic diseases. For example, the glucosinolates in rutabaga, similar to other cruciferous winter produce, have been studied for their potential anti-cancer effects because compounds help the body detoxify and provide protection against certain types of cancer.

When cooked, rutabaga's sweetness becomes more pronounced, and its texture softens. It has a starchy quality that makes it a versatile ingredient in various dishes. Some liken the taste of cooked rutabaga to that of a potato but with a slightly sweeter and nuttier undertone.

This sheet pan dinner is not only easy to prepare but also offers a flavorful and well-balanced meal. The rutabaga adds a hearty and slightly sweet element to the dish, complementing the savory chicken and roasted vegetables. Adjust the seasonings and herbs to suit your taste preferences. Enjoy your delicious rutabaga and chicken dinner!

CHICKEN:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- Salt and pepper to taste

VEGGIES:

- 2 medium-sized rutabagas, peeled and cut into bite-sized cubes
- 3 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C).

In a small bowl, mix together olive oil, minced garlic, dried thyme, dried rosemary, salt, and pepper. Place the chicken breasts on a lined baking sheet and brush them with the olive oil mixture, making sure they are well-coated. Set aside.

In another large bowl, toss the rutabaga cubes, sliced carrots, and red onion with olive oil, paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Spread the vegetables on the baking sheet around the chicken breasts.

Bake in the preheated oven for about 25-30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are tender. You can flip the chicken breasts halfway through for even cooking.

Once done, remove the sheet pan from the oven. Serve the chicken on a plate alongside the roasted rutabaga and vegetables.

Garnish with fresh herbs, such as chopped parsley, for added freshness.

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