

Celeriac

Celeriac, also called celery root, is a vegetable that cleans up well. Once you peel away its gnarled outer layer, you find a sparkling-white interior with a clean, refreshing taste that has wide appeal. Once prepared, it shows no signs of its humble past.

STORAGE

Store unwashed celeriac in a plastic bag in the refrigerator, where it will keep for several weeks.

Our Cook

One author stated that celeriac, quite homely in appearance, would fit well into a tale told by the Brothers Grimm. Do not be deterred by appearances: good things can come in ugly packaging.

Celeriac and Apple Salad with Tarragon and Roasted Walnuts

It probably isn't often that you think oooh, celeriac, and your mouth waters. But this recipe could change all that. The key here is to be sure to cut the celeriac to matchstick-size, no bigger; it will hold the sauce better. Also, don't be tempted to skimp on the pepper, as pepper and apples have a certain unexplored appeal. *Angelic Organics Kitchen*.

Serves 4 to 6

4 cups water
juice of 1 lemon (about 3 tablespoons)
2 tart apples, peeled, cored, sliced into 1/4-inch strips
1 large celeriac, peeled, cut into matchstick-sized strips
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 1/2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
2 1/2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon heavy cream
2 teaspoons prepared Dijon mustard
1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
salt

1. Combine water and lemon juice in a large bowl. Add the apple slices and celeriac strips and let stand for 15 minutes (this acidified water will keep the celeriac and apple from turning brown).

2. Toast the walnuts in a dry skillet over high heat, stirring frequently, until they begin to darken in spots, 3 to 5 minutes. Let cool.

3. Drain the celeriac and apple mixture; return to the bowl, add the vinegar, and toss.

4. Combine the mayonnaise, cream, mustard, tarragon, pepper, and salt to taste in a small bowl. Pour the dressing over the celeriac and apple mixture; toss to coat. Add the walnuts and toss again. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving (2 or 3 hours is even better).

HANDLING

Soak celeriac briefly in warm water and then scrub it with a stiff brush. Take a thin slice off the top and bottom and peel it with a sharp paring knife or a sturdy vegetable peeler. A few deep crevices will remain; leave them, or slice them out. Remove the core if it seems pithy or hollow. Like apples, celeriac will darken if exposed to the air for too long. If you don't plan to cook it immediately, submerge the celeriac in a bowl of water with the juice of one lemon squeezed in.

Scalloped Celeriac and Potatoes

Here's a variation on a classic that just might be better than the original. Traditionally, scalloped potatoes are cooked in milk or cream; here, however, we cook them in stock, and the result is a more flavorful and delightfully lighter dish. The celeriac adds a brightness that assertively sets the dish apart from its classic cousin. *Friend of the Farm*.

Serves 6

butter for greasing the baking dish

1 pound celeriac, peeled, halved, sliced about 1/8 inch thick

1 pound baking potatoes, peeled, sliced about 1/8 inch thick

salt

freshly ground black pepper

1 cup grated Gruyère or domestic Swiss cheese, divided

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

2 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock

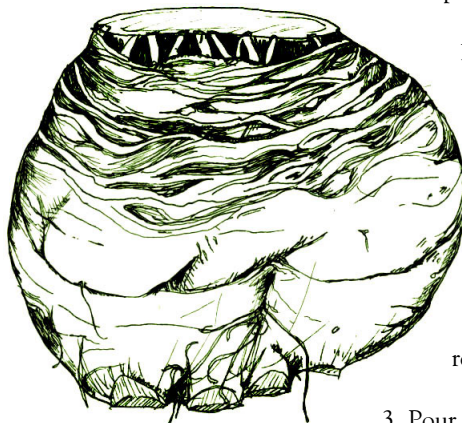
2 tablespoons butter

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a 2-quart baking dish with butter.

2. Place the celeriac and potatoes in alternating layers in the baking dish, seasoning every few layers with salt and pepper. At about the halfway point, add 1/3 cup cheese in an even layer; sprinkle with the thyme. Continue with the celeriac and potatoes, until you have used all of your slices (don't go all the way to the top edge; leave a little room to allow the liquid to boil).

3. Pour the stock over the celeriac and potatoes. Dot with butter. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for 15 minutes more. Sprinkle the remaining 2/3 cup cheese over the top layer, add several grindings of fresh pepper, and bake until the cheese turns golden, about 15 minutes.

4. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.



A Shareholder

Every week I come home with the box and put all of the vegetables onto the kitchen table to marvel at their beauty. Then I call my husband in to check out their beauty. Then I say to him, very gravely, "I love that farm," and he says back, "I know you do."

Excerpted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook.

