



RECIPE for health

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featured food:
RUTABAGA

By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Mention rutabagas to most anyone from Michigan's Upper Peninsula and you're likely to segue into a conversation about pasties (pronounced pass-tees), savory meat and vegetable pies (perhaps a prototype for Hot Pockets®?). Pasties originated in Cornwall County, England and immigrated to the United States with mine workers.

Rutabagas are an up-north vegetable eaten heartily by northern Europeans. The name means "root bag" in Swedish. Some skip the multi-syllable name and simply call them swedes or neeps. Others go with a descriptive name such as yellow turnip or winter turnip. Rutabagas thrive in the cool temperatures of fall and winter developing their sweetest and richest flavors only after prolonged cold weather. Since they store well in the ground and then in the root cellar after harvest, they were a staple in northern climates. Long-distance shipping of less winter-hardy vegetables has nudged the rutabaga aside.

A cross between the cabbage and the turnip, the rutabaga is a large round root vegetable with edible leaves. Impressively larger than a turnip, a rutabaga can weigh upwards of a pound and measure six inches across. Its thick purple and yellow exterior is often coated with wax before shipping to extend shelf life. Peel away the wax and skin to reveal a lovely butter-yellow flesh. Rutabagas are slightly bitter, less so than turnips. Cooking brings out their sweet yet savory flavor. If you want to serve raw rutabaga, be advised to blanch the cut pieces in salt water followed by an ice water shock.

Rutabagas pair well with butter, cream and warm spices such as nutmeg and smoked paprika. Besides being a key ingredient for pasties, rutabagas are perfect for roasting; making into soups, stews, and casseroles; and mashing with other root vegetables. Clapshot, for instance, is a traditional Scottish dish made by mashing rutabagas and potatoes, then seasoning with butter and chives. Yum!

Beef Pasties

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 8.

- 1 pound top sirloin, small diced
- 2 cups ¼-inch dice rutabaga
- 1½ cups ¼-inch dice carrot
- 1½ cups finely chopped yellow onion
- 1½ cups peeled, ¼-inch dice gold potatoes
- 3 Tablespoons minced fresh thyme
- 3 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 Tablespoon kosher salt
- 1½ teaspoons ground black pepper
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 egg
- 8 9-inch pie crusts

Mix together all of the ingredients except for the egg and the pie crusts; let sit for about an hour to bring the flavors together.

Preheat your oven to 375 °F.

Place about 1 cup of filling on each pie crust round, either in the middle if you want to bring sides of the pastry up and together, or on one side so you can pull the other side of the pastry over to make a semi-circle. Use your hand to compact the filling a little. Break the egg into a small bowl and add a pinch of salt and a little water; whisk adding more water as needed to make a consistency that will brush easily. Brush the edges of the pastry with the egg wash, and seal them together. If you're making semi-circles, you can decoratively crimp the edge of the pasties with a fork or your fingers.

Place the pasties on a heavy duty baking sheet lined with unbleached parchment paper. Brush all over with the egg wash. Bake until golden brown, about 45 to 50 minutes. I baked mine in two batches, but if you trust your oven you can try using two oven racks at once, rotating the pans halfway through baking.

Try **Beef Pasties** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on October 8.

- Join us in person at Brody Square Demo Kitchen. Sign-up at health4u@msu.edu.
- Watch online: alumni.msu.edu/livestream.