

Exotic Vegetables

Member's Handout

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Many times, we select well known vegetables to prepare for our families. This lesson will focus on Kohlrabi and Watermelon Radish. These two are less known vegetables but will add a new twist to our diet as well as providing added nutrients. Both vegetables add color to our plate and can be consumed cooked or raw.



Growing zones and days to maturity Kansas: USDA plant hardiness zones of 5 to 7.

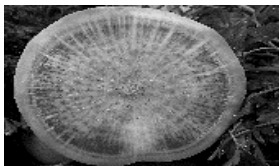
Kohlrabi grows in zones 3 -9 and matures in 45 to 60 days. It prefers rich, well-drained soil in full sun not shaded by other plants. This is a cool-season crop for spring or fall harvest.

Watermelon radish grows in zones 2-10; can be planted from early to late spring or in the fall (prefer temperature of 50 to 60° F.); thrives in well-drained, fertile, deep sandy soil rich in organic matter. Watermelon radish takes longer to mature, about 60 to 65 days. For continuous harvest, plant every two weeks. Harvesting days can vary depending on the spice level preferred in a radish.

Varieties, appearance and taste



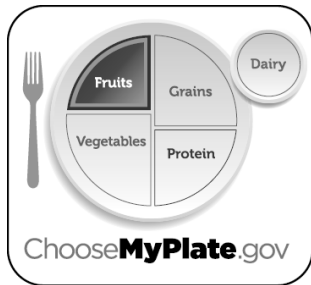
Purple Vienna Kohlrabi is purple in color, like its name implies, with green leaves. The other varieties are white and green. Kohlrabi is round or globe shaped and grows above ground and taste is between an apple and a mild turnip in flavor.



Watermelon radishes are a root vegetable, member of the Brassica family, which includes arugula, broccoli and cabbage, and is an heirloom variety of Chinese daikon radish. They get their name from their bright pink interior and green skin; their taste is similar to another radish and may have more spice flavor.

Nutritional facts, benefits and serving size

Kohlrabi is an excellent source of Vitamin C and a good source of fiber, Vitamin B6 and potassium. Vitamin C plays an essential role in repairing wounds and healing scars, as well as maintaining bones, teeth, and cartilage. Vitamin C rich foods also support absorption of iron.



Kohlrabi contains health-promoting phytochemicals that appear to have an anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory benefit. Chronic, low-level inflammation could raise your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis and other common diseases. MyPlate, www.myplate.gov, information suggests ½ cup serving size for Kohlrabi.

Eating watermelon radishes can benefit overall health in many ways. Cruciferous like radishes contain active bio compounds like glucosinolates isothiocyanate, and phenols. These compounds have been linked to reducing the risk of several chronic diseases.

Regularly consuming radishes can also have a preventive effect on cardiovascular diseases through blood pressure reduction, anti-inflammation effects, and positive links to cholesterol management.

Radishes also have a rich nutrient profile as they are high in calcium, potassium, folate, and Vitamin C. They are a good source of fiber.

According to the USDA, one cup (116 grams) of sliced raw watermelon radish is only 20.9 calories.

How to Select, Buy and Store

When selecting fresh kohlrabi choose firm plants with unwilted leaves and stems. Kohlrabi should be washed thoroughly and stored with leaf stems removed. Storage life can be extended if kohlrabi is placed in sealed perforated plastic bags. To prevent cross-contamination, keep kohlrabi away from raw meat and meat juices.

When buying watermelon radishes, make sure they are firm to touch and a little heavy for their size. Also, the skin should not have any deep cracks. The skin is edible and need not be removed. To clean the radishes, scrub them lightly to remove any dirt and grit.

If you want radishes that have a brilliant pink color, look for the ones that have pink taproots. When buying them from a farmers' market with their green tops, you can use the leaves too. Simply clean them and wilt them in a pan before adding them to salads as they are a little tough. You can also add them to flavor soups and stews.

This variety of radishes has a good shelf life. It can be stored in a plastic bag or breathable container for a couple of weeks in the crisper section of the refrigerator. You can also store cut radishes for several days in a plastic container

How to Prepare and Cook Kohlrabi



There are several ways to cook kohlrabi, most of them similar to how you cook potatoes: boiled, steamed, roasted, fried or mashed. Slices and sticks can be stir-fried, and the whole stem can be hollowed out and stuffed with a veggie and rice or meat filling and baked like stuffed peppers.

How to Prepare and Cook Watermelon Radish

You can use these beautiful radishes in many ways. Their peppery taste pairs beautifully with creamy avocados and boiled chickpeas. Add them for a burst of flavor in salads sliced or slivered for color and flavor. Try roasting them with other root vegetables for a wonderful side dish. Enjoy these elegant beauties in your salads, with sushi, or simply roasted. Other ideas include making pickles, roasting or in a variety of salads.

Closing

Whether you decide to plant and grow these vegetables, or just try them in a new dish they provide additional nutritional value to a diet and a uniqueness to your garden produce. Try one of the recipes in this publication for added variety in meal planning. Enjoy these exotic vegetables and perhaps you will find additional vegetable varieties to expand your horizons.



Watermelon Radish Pickles

Thinly slice radishes. In a bowl, add:

- 1 cup of vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons of sugar

Add the radish slices and let it sit for 15-minute delicious pickle.

For a more elaborate kimchi-style pickle, you can follow this [Traditional Korean Radish Kimchi Recipe](#).

Roasted Kohlrabi by author Holly Nilsson (www.spendwithpennies.com)

This light & fresh veggie dish is so easy to make, and is full of flavor!

Prep Time 5 minutes; **Cook Time** 23 minutes; **Total Time** 28 minutes; **Servings** 4

- 4 kohlrabi bulbs
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and black pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Cut the tops off of the kohlrabi (the greens are edible, set aside for use in salads or stir fries).
3. Cut the bulb in quarters. Once cut, peel the outer layer of skin.

4. Chop the kohlrabi into 1/2" slices, or thicker if prefer firmer vegetables.
5. Toss with olive oil, garlic powder, salt and black pepper to taste. Roast 22 to 24 minutes or until tender crisp.
6. Serve warm.
7. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Nutrition Information provided is an estimate and will vary based on cooking methods and ingredients used: Calories 73; Carbohydrates 10g; Protein 3g; Fat 4g; Saturated Fat 1g; Sodium 30mg; Potassium 525 mg; Fiber 5g; Sugar 4g; Vitamin A 54 IU; Vitamin C 93mg; Calcium 36mg; Iron 1mg.

Watermelon Radish, Orange, & Goat Cheese Salad by Raksha Hegde, author and content director at Organic Facts (www.organicfacts.net)

3 watermelon radishes

3 oranges (or use clementines or grapefruits.)

3 tbsp. goat cheese

3 tbsp. walnuts, toasted and chopped

3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

2 tbsp olive oil, extra virgin

Salt and black pepper to taste

1 tbsp. chives, minced

1. To make the salad, prep the watermelon radishes and oranges. One may cut the radishes into moon half-slices, circular slices or into carpaccio-style slivers using a mandolin. No need to peel the radishes.
2. Cut a small piece of the orange rind at the bottom of each orange and squeeze the juice on the radishes. Use a sharp knife to remove the peel completely. Now, cut the orange membranes to release the fruit flesh and chop them into bite-size pieces.
3. In a salad plate, assemble the watermelon radishes, then the orange segments, and finally sprinkle the goat cheese and walnuts.
4. Drizzle the balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

References

<https://www.organicfacts.net/watermelon-radish.html>

www.organicfacts.net

www.myplate.gov

www.spendwithpennies.com