

Eating Local and Seasonal: Radishes

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Many of us are familiar with the ping-pong ball sized radish in our grocery stores, but did you know there are many more varieties? This issue will highlight three types of radishes – Cherry Belle, Watermelon and Daikon. Take advantage of the spring season and add some new varieties into your menu this month!

Cherry Belle radish

This is the radish most commonly found in North American grocery stores. It has a bright red exterior with white coloured flesh on the inside. The texture is crisp and the flavour is sweet and mildly peppery. The most common use of this vegetable is sliced and added raw into salads.



Try: Cooking the vegetable for a softer and juicier texture! See back for recipe.

Watermelon radish



The watermelon radish got its name for its beautiful inner appearance. The colour of the flesh resembles that of a watermelon – green on the outer edges with a pink to red gradient towards the centre. This type of radish ranges from the size of a golf ball to a softball. It has a crisp and firm texture, with a mild and slightly sweet and peppery flavour.

Watermelon radish can be served fresh or cooked. Its vibrant colours are best showcased by slicing the vegetable thinly and serving it fresh in salads and sandwiches. In Asian cuisines, the vegetable is often pickled and served cold as a garnish, or cooked and added to soups and seafood dishes.

Try: Adding thinly sliced watermelon radish to a salad with greens, fennel and apple or citrus. Top with feta or goat cheese and a creamy salad dressing or vinaigrette.

Daikon radish

The Daikon radish is also commonly known as the Asian radish. Depending on the cultural use of this vegetable, it can be served raw, pickled, fermented or cooked. Unlike the other varieties, this radish is white in colour and has a longer cylindrical shape ranging from 6-12 inches in length and 2-3 inches in diameter.



In Chinese dishes, the vegetable is commonly braised with beef brisket, or grated and steamed with flour to create a savoury “turnip cake.” In the Japanese culture, the radish is grated and served raw alongside sashimi (raw fish). Vietnamese dishes commonly pickle the vegetable along with carrots and add the mixture into sandwiches or served as a side dish with rice dishes. Finally, the famous Korean kimchi (appetizer made of fermented vegetables and seasonings) uses fermented daikon in one of its variations.

Try: Briefly pickling julienned daikon radish and carrots in rice vinegar, water, sugar, salt, lime juice and chopped cilantro before adding it into salads or serving as a side dish.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

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Savoury Braised Radishes

This flavourful recipe will give you an all new way to enjoy radishes. You will particularly love this recipe if you prefer a mellower taste of radish with a softer and juicier bite. This recipe can also be used as a substitute for red potatoes with its similar appearance!



Makes about 1 cup

Ingredients:

1 slice	bacon, some visible fat removed, low sodium, diced
½ lb	radishes, halved with tops trimmed
1	shallot, thinly sliced
2 tbsp	cremini mushrooms, diced
¼ cup	no salt added vegetable broth
1 small	bay leaf
1 tbsp	curly parsley, finely chopped
1/8 tsp	pepper
1/32 tsp	salt

Directions:

1. Heat bacon over medium-high heat in a medium saucepan.
2. When bacon is cooked, place radishes in the saucepan with the cut side facing down. Cook until the bottoms begin to brown (about 3-4 minutes).
3. Add shallots and mushrooms. Stir and cook for another minute.
4. Add vegetable broth and bay leaf. Stir. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat until radishes become tender (about 20 minutes).
5. Removed lid and bay leaf. Add chopped parsley, salt and pepper.

Nutrition information (per serving):

110 calories, Fat 5 g (8% DV), Carbohydrate 12 g (4% DV), Fibre 4 g (16%), Protein 4 g, Sodium 230 mg (10% DV), Sugars 6 g, Vitamin C 70% DV

Recipe adapted from *Braised Radishes with Shallots and Bacon* from

<http://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-braised-radishes-with-shallots-bacon-recipes-from-the-kitchn-48969>