

Common Soil November Recipes



Celeriac - This knobbly veg is one of my favourites. Apparently its scientific name is *Apium graveolens* var *rapaceum* which is a bit of a mouthful! You may have heard it called turnip-rooted celery, knob celery or celery root. It's a truly versatile veggie - wonderful in soups, sauerkrauts, pickles, great as a mash or rosti, grated into salads, made into "steaks", used as a side dish, roasted (including whole), baked with other roots, divine as a puree, fabulous in veggie bakes and can be used in sweet dishes too!

To prepare: Scrub well to begin. I find it's easier to cut into thick slices and then remove the skin with either a sharp knife or potato peeler. Depending on your recipe you can grate, chop, slice, or mandolin.

Nutrient dense – high in fibre (bowel and gut health) it contains inulin; a pre-biotic fibre which feeds the good bacteria in your gut and helps it to colonise. Celeriac contains magnesium, which is important for bone formation, hormonal health and our nervous system, vitamin B6 (nervous and energy systems) and K which is good for cardiovascular health plus helps vitamin D to be utilised by the body. Celeriac is loaded with antioxidants including vitamin C and minerals phosphorus, potassium and manganese

Celeriac can be eaten raw or cooked.

Stores well – you can keep it for six to eight months if stored between 0 and 5°C.

The leaves and stem of celeriac are quite tasty, too.

Celeriac is part of the same plant family as aniseed, parsley and parsnip.

Most herbs compliment celeriac - parsley, sage, rosemary and tarragon are great partners with it. This veggie is so versatile - experiment with its taste because hazelnuts, walnuts, mustard, maple, and miso compliment it too.

Celeriac and chickpea bake – serves 2-3

680 grams celeriac

1 large onion – peeled and diced

170 grams chickpeas (prepared or tinned. If tinned drain them)

140ml veggie stock

2-3 tablespoons tahini

Seasoning

Chopped chives or any herbs you like to garnish

Peel the celeriac and slice as thinly as possible. Peel and dice the onion. Drain the chickpeas. Heat the veggie stock and stir in the tahini so that it dissolves – remember to add seasoning.

In a shallow ovenproof dish arrange layers of celeriac with onion. Sprinkle some of the chickpeas on top. Continue layering until all the celeriac, onions and chickpeas are used. Pour over the stock.

Bake uncovered at 190°C /gas mark 5 for around an hour or until the celeriac is tender. Garnish with herbs and serve with a winter salad or some baked beetroot.

Tip: This is such a versatile dish. Add different ingredients to suit your palette. Substitute crème fraiche or even mascarpone cheese instead of tahini to make vegetarian or layer with parmesan. Remove the chickpeas and substitute with chopped bacon or veggie lardons to make a "meaty" taste if you prefer. Substitute the chickpeas with black beans or lentils or another pulse if you fancy.

Celeriac chips: Preheat oven to 200°C/Gas 6. Simply prepare your celeriac into chip shapes and coat/toss in oil. Roast with either a sprinkling of cayenne pepper and grated garlic if you like them strong or thyme, sage and rosemary if you prefer a herby taste. Cook for around 25 minutes – 45 mins depending on whether your chips are chunky or skinny!

I have even found a **Celeriac rice pudding with bramble compote!** (Source: *Root & Leaf: Big, Bold Vegetarian Food* by Rich Harris) (serves 4)

250g celeriac, peeled and finely diced

250ml milk

25g caster sugar

1 vanilla pod

generous pinch freshly grated nutmeg

For the rice base

450ml whole milk

100g pudding rice

25g caster sugar
finely grated zest 1 lemon

For the bramble compote

200g blackberries
2tsp caster sugar
squeeze lemon juice

Put the celeriac, milk, vanilla seeds (scraped out) and pod, sugar and nutmeg in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan and cook for around 25 minutes until the celeriac is soft; it should give easily when pressed against the side of the pan with a spoon.

Discard the vanilla pod, then pour the mixture into a blender or processor and whizz to a purée.

Meanwhile, combine all the ingredients for the rice base in a separate saucepan, bring to a simmer and cook gently for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir the celeriac purée into the rice and bring back to a simmer, then remove the pan from the heat, cover with a lid and leave to stand for 5 minutes.

Combine all the ingredients for the compote in a small saucepan, bring to a simmer and cook gently for 5 minutes– the blackberries should start to soften but still hold their shape. Divide the rice pudding between warmed bowls and spoon over the compote to serve.

Jerusalem Artichokes: Contain iron, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium so they are really good for us. Like celeriac they contain inulin which is a PREBIOTIC and plenty of fibre so excellent for our gut health. Mother Nature is so amazing, she provided plenty of prebiotic veggies during the darker months because she knows 70% of our immune system is contained within our gut. Jerusalem artichokes also contains vitamin C & a variety of B vitamins. Love them or hate them you are likely to receive some within your veggie box so experiment and find a recipe you like. Don't be put off because you think they may give you "gas". Yes, it's true inulin can have this affect but it says more about your gut health than the veg itself. I find adding fennel seeds, asafoetida or fenugreek to the recipe helps digestion or simply drink a cup of fennel, ginger, peppermint, chamomile, dandelion root, liquorice, slippery elm or cinnamon tea to ease your digestion post meal!

Jerusalem artichokes can be eaten raw. Mandolin or cut thinly to add to salads – they taste a bit like water chestnuts raw. You can also add them to stir-fries or cook like potatoes for mash if you prefer a cooked artichoke.

Jerusalem artichoke frying pan gratin (I found this recipe in an old Riverford cookbook and it's yummy)

25 grams butter
1 tablespoon oil
1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
500grams Jerusalem artichokes, peeled and cut into 3 mm slices
A handful of thyme leaves, chopped
4 tablespoon crème fraiche
40 grams cheese – grated
100ml water

Seasoning

Heat the butter and oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and sweat for about 10 minutes until soft and beginning to colour. Add the sliced artichoke and seasoning. Pour in 100ml water and simmer. Turn heat down and cover with a lid for around 20 minutes. You may need to add a little more water. Basically the liquid should look like a thick glaze. Preheat your grill. Add the crème fraiche to the artichoke mixture, scatter the cheese on top and grill until bubbling and golden. Serve.

Justine Evans ND is a Common Soil member plus a local Naturopath and Nutritionist here in Stroud. Justine specialises in seasonal wellbeing and hormone health. For more information visit her website justineevans.co.uk.