

Rutabaga and Potato Puree

SERVES 6 TO 8

"When's the last time you ate a rutabaga?" Ed May's sign asked.

"They're sweet!"

Ed was frustrated that customers were buying his fingerling potatoes but overlooking his excellent though gnarly-looking rutabagas. People who pass these fall tubers by are missing out on a treat. They're delicious, they're mild, and they're a delicate buttery yellow color.

There's no need to worry about a specific blend here. You can use more rutabagas than potatoes, and you can include some turnips in the mix as well. Because rutabagas aren't as starchy as potatoes, you may not need to add milk, cream, or the cooking water. But if you do want to thin out the mixture, it's best if the liquid has been warmed first.

½ pound russet or other potatoes
1½ pounds rutabagas or mixed rutabagas and turnips
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
unsalted butter
freshly grated nutmeg
1 tablespoon chopped parsley and/or snipped chives

1. Peel the potatoes and rutabagas, then chop them into chunks, making the rutabagas about half the size of the potatoes (and turnips, if using) since they take longer to cook. Put them in a saucepan and cover with cold water. Add 1½ teaspoons salt and bring to a boil. Cook until soft enough to mash, about 25 minutes.
2. Drain, reserving a cup of the cooking water first, then return the vegetables to the pot and mash them with a potato masher, adding as much butter as you like. If the puree is too thick, add some of the reserved liquid or warm milk or cream to thin it. Scrape in a little nutmeg and taste for salt and season with pepper. Serve with the parsley or chives scattered over the top.

VARIATIONS:

Fold in toasted, chopped hazelnuts and serve the puree with a drizzle of hazelnut oil.

Add 1 cup grated aged Cheddar or freshly grated Parmesan cheese. Brown any leftovers in butter and serve with an arugula salad.