

WHAT'S IN SEASON //

Rutabaga Rooter

Whether roasted, mashed, or flavoring ice cream, this underappreciated root veggie is versatile and subtly sweet.

Pity the poor rutabaga: regrettably named, the lowly offspring of a cabbage and a turnip, historically thought unfit for human consumption in Europe, then overconsumed during World War II food shortages to the point of revulsion. Well, sad, bulbous root, it's time to throw off the mantle of oppression and join your cold-weather brethren in soups, braises, and gratins. Or, heck, just go for it and run naked in salads. You may not be beautiful, but you will be loved.



And we can all do our part. Beneath the smooth, yellow-lavender skin lies flesh of delicate sweetness that's heightened with roasting, adds depth to mashed potatoes, and brightens beef stews. And soup and sauté alert: Rutabagas' greens deserve love as well. Stored in plastic and refrigerated, rutabagas can last about a month, so make room among your roots and tubers.

At **Hudson at Haymount House**, (25 Studio Hill Rd, Briarcliff Manor 914-502-0080; haymountouseny.com), Chef Scott Riesenberger affords them plenty of space—and often in unexpected places, like tart pans and dessert bowls. “I like to expose people to different ways of viewing flavors,” he says. Example: “The rutabaga has a natural sweetness that lends itself to ice cream. It’s esoteric, but still approachable.” So instead of traditional pumpkin pie with vanilla ice cream, expect vanilla crème brûlée with rutabaga ice cream. Or how about a brunch of roasted rutabaga tart imbued with orange peel, shallots, and goat cheese? Or perhaps a honey- and cumin-scented caramelized rutabaga salad with apple or pear. “People may be hesitant at first,” he acknowledges, but afterwards, “they’re blown away; they get to explore something.”

A rutabaga adventure? Alert those Europeans: The root has morphed from revulsion to revelation.

Rutabaga and Braeburn Apple Soup

Courtesy of Scott Riesenberger, Hudson at Haymount House (Serves 6-8)

4 Tbsp unsalted butter
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 medium Spanish onion, sliced thin
4 large rutabagas, peeled and chopped in medium pieces
2 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, medium dice
4 Braeburn apples, peeled and cored, (sliced medium McIntosh apples can be substituted)
2 qts chicken or vegetable stock
salt and white pepper, to taste
crème fraîche, yogurt, or whipped cream, for garnish

Combine butter, olive oil, and onions in heavy-bottomed saucepot over low heat. Cook until onions are softened but not browned. Raise heat, add rutabagas, potatoes, apples, and stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until mixture is tender. Purée mixture in blender, in batches to avoid splattering hot liquid, until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with dollop of crème fraîche, yogurt, or whipped cream.

// Diane Weintraub Pohl

COFFEE WITH THE CHEF //

Andrew Masciangelo

Savona Restaurant
2 Chase Rd, Scarsdale
(914-798-0550; savonarestaurant.com)



Culinary Hero...Jean-Georges Vongerichten. The excitement he brings to his guests begins the second you walk through his doors and lasts to the second you walk out. To be able to do this—and in different locations—inspires me.

I Never Eat...baked beans, like you would have at a barbecue. I can eat them to be polite, but I try to avoid them at all costs.

I Hate It When a Diner at My Restaurant...speaks loudly and crudely and doesn't respect the other guests.

I Hate It When I'm Dining at a Restaurant and...the wait staff is more interested in hanging out with their co-workers than taking care of guests.

What Waiters Should Never Do...Be seen eating.

The Strangest Request from a Diner...A tuna dish without tuna or a pasta dish without pasta. It happens more often than you would think.

Favorite Form of Exercise...Putting away the dry-goods order. Fifty-pound bags of flour are quite a workout.

Shoes I Wear in the Kitchen...Dansko clogs.

The Worst Kitchen Accident...I had an employee up on a step stool, cleaning the exhaust, and, when he was stepping down, he put his leg into a bucket of super-hot scrub water for cleaning the floor. He was burned up to his knee. I felt horrible.

My Eating Disorder Is...I love to eat a big feast late at night. I know I shouldn't eat that much and then go to bed but, if I don't, I just lie there and stare at the ceiling.

I Think Nutritionists Are...a bit boring, but everyone should know how to eat clean and healthy. And everybody should break the rules once in a while.

Favorite Pain Reliever...Ice and sleep.

Culinary School Can't Teach...how to change an oven thermostat or how to fix a leaky sink.

Most Famous Person I Ever Cooked for...Bill Cosby in culinary school; Pervez Musharraf at Savona in Gulph Mills, Pennsylvania; and Mariah Carey at Savona in Scarsdale.

// John Bruno Turiano

More Naan! More Masala!

In the past decade, Indian cuisine has taken off in the County.

No. of Indian Restaurants in Westchester, 2003: 11

No. of Indian Restaurants in Westchester, 2013: 21

// Alexandra Vinci with JBT