

Radishes are root vegetables that resemble beets or turnips in appearance and texture, but have a distinct flavor. It is the root of a plant classified in the mustard family. Radishes can be round, oval, or elongated, and they range from less than one inch to two feet long. Although skin color varies from white to yellow, red, purple, and black, the inside of the radish is usually white.

Facts

The name comes from the Latin *radix*, meaning "root."

In the United States radishes are usually eaten raw; however, they can be added to cooked dishes or served whole. In Chinese and Japanese cuisines, radishes are a staple consumed raw, preserved, or cooked. The Japanese chop or grate daikon and use it as a condiment for sushi, sashimi, and many other dishes.

History

Radishes were first cultivated thousands of years ago in China, then in Egypt and Greece. The earliest radishes to be cultivated were the black varieties. Radishes were so highly regarded in Greece that gold replicas were made. The radish did not make its way to England until approximately 1548. By 1629 they were being cultivated in Massachusetts.

Where Grown

The biggest crops grown in the United States come from California and Florida, but most states grow radishes.

Types

There are five main varieties of radishes.

- **Red Globe** - This variety is the most popular in the United States and is the familiar looking red and white radish. It is small, round or oval shaped, sometimes referred to as "button" red radishes. They range in diameter from one to four inches (most commonly closer to one inch) and have a solid, crisp, flesh. Available year-round.
- **Black** - This variety is turnip-like in size and shape, approximately eight inches long. Black radishes have a dull black or dark brown skin. When peeled, their flesh is white, quite pungent, and drier than other radishes. Black radishes have a longer shelf-life than most radishes, so they are available year-round, although the crop peaks in winter and early spring.
- **Daikons** - This variety is native to Asia. They are very large, carrot-shaped radishes that are up to 18 inches long and weigh one to two pounds. Daikons have a white flesh that is juicy and a bit hotter than a red radish, but milder than black. Available year-round, but are most flavorful in fall and winter.

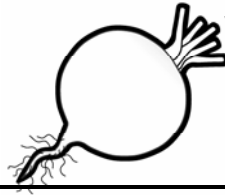
Sources:

Encyclopedia of Foods: A Guide to Healthy Nutrition. Dole Food Company: 2002.

5 A Day, Fruit and Vegetable of the Month: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5ADay/month/index.htm>

OCTOBER – Featured Vegetable: RADISH

Pick a **better** snack™



WASH. EAT.

(how easy is that?)

-
- **White Icicles** - This variety is long, up to a half foot, and tapered. They have a white flesh that is milder than the red variety. Generally available year-round.
 - **California Mammoth White** - A larger variety than the white icicle, these radishes have oblong-shaped roots about eight inches long. Their flesh is slightly pungent. Generally available year-round.

Nutrients

- High in vitamin C
- A source of phytochemicals (plant compounds) that may help prevent cancer

Sources:

Encyclopedia of Foods: A Guide to Healthy Nutrition. Dole Food Company: 2002.

5 A Day, Fruit and Vegetable of the Month: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5ADay/month/index.htm>