



NUTRITION CONSULTING INC.

## Produce Confusion: Yam or Sweet Potato? Rutabaga or Turnip? Kale or Spinach?

By Andrea Holwegner BSc, RD

With so many foods in the produce aisle to choose from, you might be wondering which are best. If you are a nutrition geek or foodie who enjoys comparing the differences between popular produce, here is the rundown:

### What is the difference between sweet potatoes and yams?

Yams and sweet potatoes are actually different species and not from the same family. Even grocery stores often mislabel these two foods, so here is a clear way to tell them apart:

#### Sweet potatoes:

- Found frequently in most grocery stores.
- Shaped like a potato or a longer tapered potato.
- 2 common varieties: light tan skin with yellow flesh (drier texture and less sweet) and brownish red skin with orange flesh (soft and sweet).
- Other varieties can have an exterior that is white, yellow, orange or purple.
- Slightly lower in calories.
- Higher in beta-carotene (a nutrient which is cancer and heart disease protective).
- Lower glycemic (the carbohydrate goes into the bloodstream slower).



#### Yams

- Not widely available in grocery stores (yams sold in grocery stores are often actually orange sweet potatoes).
- More common in Latin American or Caribbean markets and are often cut into large chunks since they can grow to extremely large sizes over a hundred pounds.
- Shaped like long cylinders and when small look just like a sweet potato.
- Exterior is rough and often brown or black and inside is yellow, white or purple.
- Slightly higher in fibre and potassium.

It's your **health.**



**Take a stand.**

**NUTRITION COACHING | SEMINARS | CONSULTING**

PHONE: (403) 262-3466 [www.healthstandnutrition.com](http://www.healthstandnutrition.com)



NUTRITION CONSULTING INC.

### 3 ways to prepare:

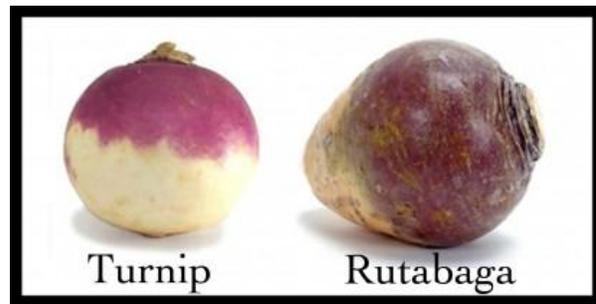
1. Peel and slice into sticks and brush with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and paprika and roast in the oven until done.
2. Prick with a thin bladed knife and bake in the oven on a foil-lined pan until very tender. Serve immediately with a pinch of salt, pepper and butter.
3. Use leftover roasted sweet potato/yam chunks added to a tossed green salad with grilled chicken or lentils and your favourite vinaigrette.

### What is the difference between rutabaga and turnip?

These ancient cool weather crops belong to the cruciferous family and are known for their bold flavour as a side vegetable or as a common addition to stews and soups.

#### Turnip:

- Smaller in size
- Exterior is white and purple and inside is white
- Milder, sweeter flavour
- Nutritionally very similar to rutabagas



#### Rutabaga:

- Thought to have evolved from a cross between a turnip and wild cabbage.
- Can be as large as a cantaloupe.
- Exterior is dark yellow and purple and the inside is bright to pale yellow.
- Said to have a slightly stronger flavour – especially if larger.

### 3 ways to prepare:

1. Peel and slice into sticks then toss in olive oil and sprinkle with pepper and salt and roast in the oven until tender.
2. Peel and slice and then steam until tender. Add a little butter, fresh parsley or other fresh herbs.
3. Peel and slice into chunks and boil until tender. Mash with milk, a splash of balsamic vinegar and a dash of nutmeg, salt and pepper.

It's your **health.**



**Take a stand.**

**NUTRITION COACHING | SEMINARS | CONSULTING**

PHONE: (403) 262-3466 [www.healthstandnutrition.com](http://www.healthstandnutrition.com)

## Which is better spinach or kale?

It is no surprise that both of these dark leafy greens are top-notch nutritious choices. Kale continues to be a trendy vegetable but if you prefer spinach and were wondering if it was as nutritious here are the minor geeky nutrition differences for you to compare:

### Spinach

- Loaded with antioxidants that are good for overall preventative health of cardiovascular disease, cancer and eye health.
- Higher in iron.
- Slightly higher in folate.



### Kale

- Fantastic nutrition powerhouse that is good for preventing cardiovascular disease and eye health.
- Higher in vitamin C.
- Slightly higher in fibre, vitamin A, calcium.

### 3 ways to prepare:

1. As a salad with your favourite vinaigrette, toasted nuts or seeds, dried cranberries and cheese (such as asiago, blue or parmesan).
2. Sautéed in a pan with olive oil, minced garlic, fresh squeezed lemon juice, salt and pepper.
3. Sneak into a smoothie with frozen mango, berries and unsweetened juice to create a great green morning beverage or healthy delicious snack.

Regardless of whatever produce you choose to eat, keep in mind there are no single winning foods, only winning diets. Variety is the spice of life since all plant foods provide unique health benefits. The key is to mix it up.

---

*Andrea Holwegner, known as the Chocoholic Dietitian, is founder and president of Health Stand Nutrition Consulting Inc., a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and a media expert for the Dietitians of Canada. For nutrition counselling information and to sign up for a free monthly newsletter loaded with nutrition tips, recipes and more visit [www.healthstandnutrition.com](http://www.healthstandnutrition.com). Twitter @chocoholicRD.*

