

ORIENTAL RADISHES 中國蘿蔔 (菜頭、大根) 93-2-1

(*Raphanus sativus*)

(Other names: Lobak, Daikon)

Unlike Western radishes, oriental radishes have a large, crisp, swollen root. There are many varieties differing in root size, shape, and color of skin and flesh. The weight of a root may range from 2 to 8 pounds with an unusual variety in Japan that weighs up to 50 pounds. The length of the root ranges from 4 to 20 inches. The shape may be round, oblong or cylindrical. The color of skin and flesh is mostly white. A few varieties have green, purple, or red skin and flesh. Most are mildly pungent and are suitable for fall planting. The plants are about 1 to 2 feet high when they are mature vegetables and about 3 to 6 feet high when flower stalks develop. Leaves are light or dark green with various deep cuts.



HOW TO GROW: For full development of the roots, grow in rich sandy soil or dig the soil deep before sowing. Sow seeds 14-20 inches apart in rows. Plant seeds at a depth of 1/2 an inch. Seeds germinate in 4-8 days. When the plant is about 3 inches tall, thin seedlings to stand 4-8 inches apart, depending on the variety. Many leaves will form before the roots begin to swell. The root swells rapidly and may push 2-4 inches out of the ground.

WHEN TO PLANT: Most radishes are suitable for a fall crop. However some varieties can be grown in spring or even in summer. Be sure to check the proper growing season before sowing, otherwise they will grow into seeds with small roots. For early varieties, sow seeds in early spring. For fall crops sow the seeds in late summer or early fall (about 3 months before the first expected frost). Fall crops can tolerate a light frost.

CARE AND HARVEST: Water when the weather is dry. Do not overwater at the stage of root development; this will cause the roots to crack. Fertilizing one or two times is enough before harvesting. After a light frost use a fork and dig the long roots carefully. They are so crisp that they are almost brittle. Some varieties can be stored throughout the entire winter. In mild-winter areas, the roots of all varieties can be kept in the garden like carrots and beets. Small quantities can be kept in the refrigerator, well wrapped in a plastic bag, for a few weeks.

VARIETIES: There are many varieties:

1. **All Season White:** Long, white roots are about 1-1½ feet long and 2 inches in diameter. Tender and pungent. For spring or fall planting. About 45 days to harvesting.
2. **White and Long:** Popular variety in Taiwan. Roots are white, about 1 foot long and 2 inches across. Crisp and tender. For summer and early fall crops. About 55 days to harvesting.
3. **Minowase:** There are early, medium and late varieties. Can be grown in spring and fall. Roots are white, 1-1½ feet long, tender and a little pungent. About 45 days to harvesting. Recently there are hybrids, Mino Spring Cross and Mino Summer Cross for spring and summer planting.
4. **Shantung Green Skin:** The portion of the root above ground is green and that below ground is white. The root is slender, about 10 inches long and 2 inches across, weighing 1 lb. It is crisp and sweet. The more it is preserved, the sweeter it becomes. Harvest in the fall and store in a barn or beneath the ground for next spring use.

5. Green Skin and Red Flesh: A very unusual radish with green skin and reddish purple flesh, which is popular in the Peking area. The roots are short and round, about 5 inches long and 3 inches across, weighing 1-1&1/2 pounds. Recently, several hybrid varieties have come on the market. Overall, they are better than ordinary varieties. Some can be grown during the summer.

USES: Oriental radishes are good raw or cooked. Unlike European radishes, oriental radishes are peeled before using. Raw radishes are delicious when cut into thin slices and served sprinkled with a bit of soysauce. Green Skin radishes can be eaten as fruits and are usually sold on roadside fruit stands in some parts of China. Oriental radishes can be cooked like turnips. They are also delicious when cut into small chunks, and steamed over boiling water for 5 minutes, or until tender. Young radish leaves can be salted or dried for storage in the winter. They make a good vegetable dish if chopped and cooked in a little chicken broth until barely tender. Season with butter and a little pepper.

RECIPES:

1. **Radish Salad**

Ingredients:

- 1 lb White radish, washed, peeled and cut into thin strips.
- 1 tblsp Bunching onion (scallion), minced.
- 2 tblsp Corn oil (or other vegetable oil).

- Seasoning:
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|---------|------------|------------|
| 1 tsp | Salt | } Mix Well |
| 1 tblsp | Soysauce | |
| 1 tsp | Sesame oil | |
| 1 ts | Vinegar | |
| 1 tblsp | Sugar | |

Procedure:

1. Heat corn oil in frying pan until hot. Add bunching onion. Remove from frying pan and add quickly to seasoning mixture. Mix well.
2. Just before serving, add seasoning to the radishes and mix well.

2. **Braised Oriental White Radish**

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lb Fresh oriental white radishes, washed, peeled and cut into chunks.
- 2 tblsp Corn oil (or vegetable oil).
- 1 sp Salt
- 1 tsp Sugar
- 1 cup Chicken broth (or bouillon cubes)

Procedure:

1. Heat corn oil in saucepan until hot. Add radishes and stir fry for 5 minutes.
2. Add sugar and salt. Stir and mix for another minute.
3. Add chicken broth and 1/2 a cup of water; cover and bring to a boil; then reduce heat to low.
4. Cook for 30 minutes or until the radishes are soft and tender. Stir 2 or 3 times during the cooking period.
5. Serve hot.

Note: You may add carrots, the same amount as the radishes, peeled and cut into chunks.