



CELERY ROOT PUREE

45 MINUTES

8 SERVINGS

For a slightly more sophisticated spin on mashed potatoes for our holiday menu, we reached for an unlikely candidate: celery root. A once-popular, widely available vegetable, celery root today gets little attention in American kitchens. Perhaps in part because of its intimidating appearance. When cooked and processed, however, this knobby, gnarled root could pass for a classic French potato puree. Celery root—which also goes by the name celeriac—has a delicate flavor and is far less starchy than potatoes. To

balance that lightness, we paired it with Yukon Golds to produce a medium-bodied puree. We cooked the vegetables in a mixture of milk and half-and-half, a combination that won't dilute or mask celery root's flavor. A stick of butter (it is the holidays, after all) gave the puree a silky texture. We liked the flavors of thyme and garlic, but small amounts of sage, rosemary, bay and marjoram worked, too. The cooled puree can be refrigerated for two days; rewarm in a saucepan over low heat and check the seasoning before serving.

Don't add too much cooking liquid right away. The moisture content of starchy vegetables can vary greatly, so each puree will vary. If your puree is quite loose, start with just a splash and go from there.

INGREDIENTS

2	POUNDS CELERY ROOT, PEELED AND CUT INTO 1-INCH PIECES
1	POUND YUKON GOLD POTATOES, PEELED AND CUT INTO 1-INCH PIECES
2	CUPS HALF-AND-HALF
2	CUPS WHOLE MILK
4	GARLIC CLOVES, PEELED AND SMASHED
4	SPRIGS FRESH THYME
	KOSHER SALT
8	TABLESPOONS (1 STICK) SALTED BUTTER
	GROUND BLACK PEPPER
	CHOPPED FRESH CHIVES (OPTIONAL)

DIRECTIONS

In a large saucepan over high heat, combine the celery root, potatoes, half-and-half, milk, garlic, thyme and 1½ teaspoons salt. Bring to a boil, then cover, leaving the lid slightly ajar, and reduce heat to low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender, about 25 minutes. The mixture will froth and foam and may appear curdled; watch carefully to prevent boiling over.

Drain the vegetables, reserving the liquid. Remove and discard the thyme sprigs, then transfer the solids to a food processor. Process until smooth, about 1 minute. Return to the pan along with the butter. Set over low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the butter is melted. Starting with ½ cup, gradually stir in the reserved cooking liquid until the puree reaches the desired consistency. The puree should be not quite pourable. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with chives, if using.