

Jerusalem Artichoke

Helianthus tuberosus



Other names

sunchoke, sunroot

This plant has actually no relationship to 'Jerusalem', is only very remotely related to the 'artichoke' and is actually a type of sunflower. Originally named by its European discoverers, 'Girasole' is the Italian word for 'sunflower'.

Over time the mispronunciation of this became 'Hierusalem' and eventually 'Jerusalem'. The label of 'artichoke' was assigned by a French explorer Samuel de Champlain who when describing the taste of the edible tuber noted that it was similar in flavour to the artichoke.

Description

Jerusalem Artichoke is an herbaceous perennial known to grow as high as 3 metres and is like the sunflower in appearance but with a smaller seed head. The plant tubers are similar in appearance to ginger root and similar in texture to potatoes (when both raw & cooked) The taste is also similar to potatoes though sweeter and nuttier. The colour can vary between white and pale brown with varieties including red or purple.

Part/s used

Tuber

Nutrients

an excellent source of soluble dietary fibre

Phytochemicals

known to be one of the best sources of Inulin

Medicinal properties

As a prebiotic, inulin can improve and help maintain good digestive and gut health. Its properties as an indigestible soluble fibre mean that it becomes a source of nourishment to the good microflora of the small intestine and colon. As these 'good' bacteria flourish, potentially detrimental organisms are unable to thrive and this results in an overall improvement to the health and well being of the human host.

Because of its low caloric value as a carbohydrate, inulin can be used to replace fats & sugars in food products and can be suitable for diabetics. When mixed with milk or water inulin can increase a sense of fullness and satiety which may be of use in weight management.

As a dietary fibre, inulin can assist in healthy bowel function

Inulin has been shown in human clinical studies to aid in the absorption and deposition of calcium and other minerals

Inulin has been reported in studies to lower serum triglycerides and blood cholesterol levels.

Jerusalem Artichoke, raw Nutritional value per 150 g	
Energy	109 kcal 456 kJ
Carbohydrates	26.2g 9%
- Sugars	14.4 g
- Dietary fibre	2.4 g 10%
Fat	0.0mg 0%
Protein	3.0g 6%
Vitamin A equiv.	30 µg 1%
Thiamin (Vit. B)	0.3mg 20%
Riboflavin (Vit. B2)	0.1mg 5%
Naicin (Vit. B3)	2mg 10%
Pantothenic acid (Vit B5)	0.6mg 6%
Vitamin B6	0.1mg 6%
Folate (Vit. B9)	19.5 µg 5%
Vitamin C	6 mg 10%
Vitamin E	0.3 mg 1%
Calcium	21 mg 2%
Copper	0.2mg 10%
Iron	5.1 mg 28%
Magnesium	25.5mg 6%
Manganese	0.1mg 4%
Phosphorous	117mg 12%
Potassium	643mg 18%
Selenium	1.1mcg 2%
Sodium	6 mg 0%
Zinc	0.2mg 1%

Percentages are relative to US recommendations for adults based on the USDA Nutrient database