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Ingredients

Enough for 4

- Parsnips – 450g
- Dripping, duck fat or butter – a couple of spoonfuls

Nigel Slater's *Roast Parsnips*

I cook them in dripping or butter for preference. Groundnut oil if there is nothing else. They take forty minutes to colour interestingly but an hour will turn them into vegetable toffee. The initial steaming is worth the ten minutes' wait and the pan to rinse and dry, helping as it does to keep them moist during the roasting and preventing them from toughening up in the heat.

Peel your parsnips, cut them into fat lumps and steam them for ten minutes in a colander over a pan of boiling water. Warm a couple of heaped spoonfuls of fat in a roasting tin at 180°C/Gas 4, then tip in the steamed parsnips. Roast for forty-five minutes or so, till their insides are soft and creamy, their exterior gold, brown and, here and there, almost black. An occasional turn in the pan is a good thing, but too much meddling will prevent them achieving the ultimate sticky crust (the same goes for sausages, which I mention only because the two make a lovely pair). Inevitably the parsnips will have one side – that which lies underneath – darker and chewier than the others. It is part of the pleasure.



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