

Beets

Nutritional Notes by Martha Berkesch

Beets, one of my favorite vegetables, are in the same family as Swiss chard and spinach. Wild beets date back to prehistoric times in North Africa and then grew in Asia and Europe. Originally, people only ate the greens until Roman times when they began eating the root. With high sugar content, beets are used as an alternative source of sugar to cane sugar. Because they are so sweet, I have found they go well with chocolate to make sweet and moist beet brownies or chocolate cake! Betacyanin is the phytochemical that gives it its rich dark red color and that is responsible for significantly reducing homocysteine levels. Beets are a remarkable source of vitamin C, choline, folic acid, iodine, copper, phosphorous, manganese, organic sodium, potassium, fiber and carbohydrates. Although beets contain smaller amounts of iron, the quality of the iron is high. The greens contain high amounts of the antioxidants beta-carotene and lutein and are just as good for you as the root. The powerful nutrients in beets have been shown to prevent heart disease, birth defects (because of its high folate levels) and some cancers, especially colon cancer, and to help reduce inflammation. The beet and its juice have been used to prevent and cure all types of ailments, from cancer to detoxification to dandruff. If you want to start drinking beet juice, start with small amounts (1 beet a week) and don't be alarmed if your stool turns bright red!

Oven Roasted Beets & Potatoes

8 medium beets peeled

6 medium potatoes peeled

4TBS butter

2TBS thyme leaves chopped

2TBS rosemary leaves chopped

Salt & pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees, use a 9 inch skillet. Using a mandolin, slice the vegetables into rounds about 1/8 inch thick, set aside. In a small pot melt the butter over medium heat. Stir in the thyme & rosemary. Brush half the herbed butter into the base of the skillet and up the sides. Stack 16-20 beet slices, & then lay the stack on its side along the edge of the skillet. Follow by a stack of 10-12 potato sliced. Continue this pattern until you have formed a ring around the skillet. Repeat the process to fill the center. Brush the remaining herbed butter on top of the vegetables, then season with salt & pepper. Roast until the surface of the vegetables is golden & crisp & the interior is tender 25-30 minutes.

Beet Salad with Carrots

2 large carrots

1 large crisp apple

2 medium beets

1c mint roughly chopped

Dressing:

¼ c apple cider vinegar

¼ c olive oil

1TBS honey

¾ ground cumin

Salt & pepper

In a medium bowl whisk together all of the dressing ingredients. Using a mandolin with a 1/8 blade shred the carrots & apple & place them in a large bowl. Shred the beets with the mandolin then rinsed them under cold running water 3-4 times. (You can also grate the veggies) Add the beets & the mint to the bowl with the carrots & apple. Pour the dressing over & toss to coat well.

Detoxifier Juice

- 1 beet
- 1 carrot
- 1 apple
- 1 lemon

Wash all ingredients, no need to peel them, chop them into chunks, and push through a juicer. Consume immediately.

Kale, Lentil & Roasted Beet Salad

- 3 Leeks chopped
- 1 beet quartered
- 2TBS olive oil
- 1/2 c green lentils rinsed clean
- 1c vegetable stock
- 4 big handfuls kale
- Salt & pepper
- Dressing:
 - 1/4c tahini
 - ½ lemon juice
 - 2TBS maple syrup
 - 4TBS olive oil
 - Salt & pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees, lightly grease a baking sheet. Add lentils & stock to a small saucepan & bring to a rapid simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat & simmer for 20-30 minutes. Add leeks & beets to the baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil & season with salt & pepper. Toss to coat, bake in oven for 20 minutes. Prepare dressing by adding all ingredients to a mixing bowl & whisk to combine. Add greens, beets, lentils to a large mixing bowl, add dressing & toss to coat.

Baked Carrot Beet Burgers

- 1/2 cup sesame seeds
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 2 cups peeled, grated beets
- 2 cups grated carrots
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup cooked rice or quinoa
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 3 Tbls flour
- 1 Tbls tamari
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

Toast the sesame and sunflower seeds separately in a skillet for 3-5 minutes each, being careful not to burn them. Combine the beets, carrot and onion in a large bowl. Stir in the remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly until combined. Shape the mixture into 12 patties and arrange them on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 for about 20 minutes until the patties are brown around the edges. *Farmer John's Cookbook

Borscht

6 medium-sized beets, tops and roots trimmed to 1 inch

1 onion, diced

2 russet potatoes, peeled and diced

3 cups vegetable or chicken broth

2 Tbls chopped fresh dill

2 Tbls lemon juice

Salt and pepper

Sour cream or plain yogurt to garnish

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Wash the beets but do not peel. Divide the beets between two large sheets of heavy-duty aluminum foil and fold each to form a well-sealed packet. Roast for 50-60 minutes, until the largest beet is soft. Remove from the oven, open the packets, and let cool. When the beets are cool enough to handle, peel and cut into shoestrings. Meanwhile, combine the onion, potatoes, broth and dill in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are completely tender, about 20 minutes. Cool briefly. Mash the potatoes into the broth. Stir in the beets. Season with lemon juice, salt and pepper. Serve hot or chilled, garnishing each bowl with a dollop of sour cream and a sprig of dill. (You can also chop the beet greens and steam until tender, 3-5 minutes. Stir in to the broth along with the beets.) *Serving Up the Harvest

Sweet Apple Cider Baby Beets

5 lbs. baby beets, scrubbed

2 cups apple cider vinegar

1 cup water

2 Tbls salt

2 Tbls brown sugar or honey

Per jar:

1/2 tsp allspice berries

1/4 tsp black peppercorns

1 star anise pod

1 cinnamon stick

Trim the beets. Place the beets in a large nonreactive pot. Cover with water and boil until the beets are just tender. Strain and run the beets under cold water. Once the beets are cool enough to handle, remove the skins. Rinse the pot and bring the vinegar, water, salt, and brown sugar to a boil. Place spices in each hot jar. Tightly pack beets into the jars. Pour boiling brine over beets, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Check for air bubbles, wipe the rims, and seal. Process for 40 minutes. Yields 4 pints. *Tart and Sweet

Roasted Root Vegetable Medley Make this recipe & use the vegetables in salads, eggs, served with quinoa, the options are endless.

8-12 slender carrots, peeled and trimmed

4-6 turnips, peeled

6-8 fingerling potatoes, scrubbed and cut lengthwise in halves

1-2 medium onions, trimmed, peeled and halved, each 1/2 cut into quarters

2-4 small beets, peeled and cut into thick wedges

1 whole head garlic, separated into cloves, unpeeled

2-3 sprigs fresh rosemary, sage, or thyme

Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 400. Put all the vegetables and the herb sprigs in a large baking dish. Season well with salt and black pepper, drizzle generously with olive oil, and toss them with your hands to coat them evenly. Bake until they are tender and golden brown, about 45 minutes. -Food Network

Grated Beet Salad This delightful salad satisfies even the beet weary crowd.

1 pound beets

6 T freshly squeezed orange juice

2 T freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 T olive oil

4 T minced chives, mint or parsley (or a combination)

Salt to taste

Cosmic Greens

Peel the beets with a vegetable peeler, and then grate. Combine the orange juice, lemon juice and olive oil. Toss with the beets and herbs. Season to taste with salt. Line a salad bowl or platter with Cosmic greens and top with the grated beets. –Martha Stewart

Roasted Beets and Kale

3 med. red beets

Salt

Pepper

Garlic powder

Olive oil (eyeball it)

2 T. olive oil

3 garlic cloves, chopped

1lb. chopped kale

1/8 c pine nuts

Juice of half a lemon

1/4 tsp salt

1/8 tsp pepper (or to taste)

Pre-heat oven to 450 F. Peel the beets and chop into 1-inch cubes (or a little smaller). Season with salt, pepper, garlic powder, and olive oil. Place on a baking sheet and roast for 30 minutes. Five minutes before the beets are done, place the pine nuts on the baking sheet to toast until gold (keep an eye on the pine nuts as they could burn faster than that). Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large sauté or sauce pan. Start with 1 tablespoon and add more later if needed. Add the kale, and let it cook for 10-15 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Add the roasted beets and pine nuts to the kale. Stir for the flavors to combine. Serve hot.

Borscht Popular throughout Eastern Europe, there are too many variations of this dish to count. Some contain beef and other vegetables; this is a simple vegetarian version. Serve with sour cream!

1 bunch beets, about a pound, trimmed, peeled and grated (use gloves to prevent staining!)

1 large yellow onion, chopped

1 ½ quarts good vegetable stock

Salt and pepper to taste

Juice of half a lemon

2 tablespoons brown sugar

Minced fresh dill, chives or parsley

Sour Cream, to garnish

Place the grated beets and chopped onion into a large stockpot, pour in the vegetable stock, bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer 25-30 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool a bit. With a hand blender, or in batches in a blender or food processor, puree the mixture till fairly or completely smooth, your choice. Add the sugar, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Reheat gently for 2- 3 minutes, and then taste for seasonings. The soup should have a slightly sweet-and-sour taste. May also be made with beef broth for variation.

Beet & Arugula Salad

Arrange clean, trimmed arugula on a salad place. Trim, peel and dice 2 beets, then simmer till softened in a small bit of water. Cool and top your greens with it. Serve with a tart vinaigrette & some crumbled blue cheese. That's it!