

# Beets

Love them or hate them, beets have been a part of culinary tradition for centuries! Early humans only ate the greens of beets – the root at that time was thin and fibrous. Beets as we know them, round and bulbous, were cultivated in Europe nearly 500 years ago; the first written record of them dates back to the 16th century.

In the 18th century, a chemist in Berlin discovered how to extract sugar from beets. Today, around 20% of the world's sugar comes from beets.

## **CULINARY TIPS**

- The entire beet plant is edible and the greens taste a bit like chard or spinach.
- Beets' natural sweetness makes them a wonderful addition to desserts and they pair very well with chocolate!
- The skins of roasted beets slip right off. Wrap beets in foil, roast them for an hour or so at 350 degrees, let them cool slightly, then rub the skin off. Cooked beets will keep in your fridge for 3-5 days.
- Red beets will dye everything that touches them. Use yellow or Chioggia beets when mixing them with other veggies.

## **HOW TO STORE BEETS**

Remove the greens from the beetroot. Store both, unwashed, in plastic bags in the refrigerator. The greens will keep for 3-5 days and the beetroot will keep for months. Cooked, peeled beets that are wrapped well can be frozen for 8-10 months.

## **3 WAYS TO PREPARE BEETS**

- Grate them and toss them into salads! They pair nicely with carrots, apples, and kohlrabi. Dress with a lemon vinaigrette.
- Roast them and keep them in the fridge. Add the roasted beets to salads or quickly warm them in butter or oil for an easy side dish.
- Sauté shallots in a bit of olive oil, add grated beets, and cook for a few minutes. Then add chopped beet greens and cook until tender. Season with fresh lemon or your favorite vinegar.

## **QUICK PICKLED BEETS**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1-2 bunches beets from 1 to 2 ½ inches wide, washed trimmed tops & roots to 1 inch  
½ c. onion sliced  
½ c. apple cider vinegar  
1 T water  
1 T sugar  
¼ t. whole black peppercorn  
Salt

To cook the beets, cover with water and simmer just until tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and discard the liquid. Remove the stems, roots, and skins. Baby beets (under 1 ½ inches) can be left whole. Quarter or halve larger beets. In a medium-sized pot, combine vinegar, water, sugar, peppercorns, and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Add beets and onions to liquid and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring often.

To can, pack vegetables into sterilized hot pint jars and add the hot vinegar solution. Leave ½ inch headspace. Lid jars. Process for 30 minutes in a hot water bath. Cool, label and date, and store.

## **BEET DIP WITH GOAT CHEESE & HAZELNUTS**

### **INGREDIENTS**

6 medium beets, trimmed  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 small red chile, seeded and minced  
1 c. plain greek yogurt  
3 T extra virgin olive oil  
1 ½ T pure maple syrup  
1 T za'atar  
¼ c. hazelnuts, roasted, skinned, and chopped  
2 T crumbled goat cheese  
2 scallions, thinly sliced  
salt to taste

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Put the beets in a small roasting pan with ½ inch of water. Cover tightly with foil and bake 1 hour, or until tender. Let cool slightly and slip the skins off. Cut the beets into wedges and transfer to the bowl of a food processor. Add the garlic, chile, and yogurt, and pulse until blended. Add the oil, maple syrup, and za'atar. Puree until smooth. Season with salt. Transfer to a wide, shallow bowl. Scatter the toasted hazelnuts, goat cheese, and scallions on top. Enjoy warm with toasted bread.