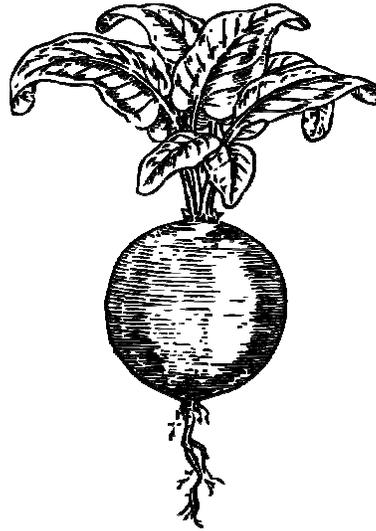


Cooking with Beets



Beets have the highest sugar content of any vegetable! Their lovely sweet flavor is best highlighted when they are slow roasted or steamed. They pair well with goat cheese, bacon, smoked fish, walnuts, horseradish, chives, and citrus. Beets are great shredded raw into a salad, giving a fresh crunch to our winter diet.

Purchasing: Locally grown beets are available throughout the summer, fall, and winter months. Choose beets that are firm. Small beets can be roasted whole (skins slip off easily once cooked) while larger beets are easier to peel, and more suitable for grating.

How to Store: Beets store best in cold (32 - 40 degrees F) and very moist conditions (90- 95% relative humidity). Minor blemishes are not a problem if the beets are not intended for long-term storage. Store beets in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator in a plastic bag, or in an open container covered with a damp cloth.

How to Roast Beets

Recipe Source: www.nytimes.com

Roasting is the easiest way to cook beets, not least because the skins will slip right off.

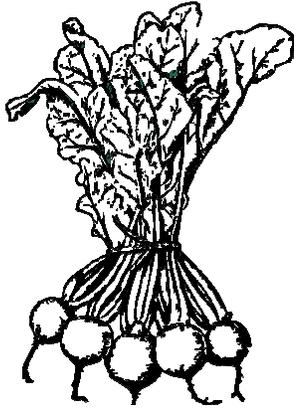
1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
2. Scrub the beets and place in a baking dish with a lid. Add 1/4 inch of water to the dish. Cover tightly. (Another option: Place beets in center of a large piece of heavy-duty foil. Drizzle a small amount of olive oil over the beets. Fold foil around the beets to create an airtight pouch.)
3. Place in the oven and roast small beets (three ounces or less) for 30 to 40 minutes, medium beets (four to six ounces) for 40 to 45 minutes, and large beets (eight ounces or more) for 50 to 60 minutes. They're done when they're easily penetrated with the tip of a knife.
4. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the covered baking dish. Cut away the ends and slip off the skins.

Roasted beets are wonderful on their own, with a little salt and pepper, or simply dressed with a vinaigrette, and they will keep for five days in a covered bowl in the refrigerator.

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Raw Beet Salad

Recipe source: www.markbittman.com

Beets, like carrots, can be eaten raw. And they're delicious that way, crunchy and sweet. So sweet, in fact, that they need a strongly acidic dressing like this one for balance.

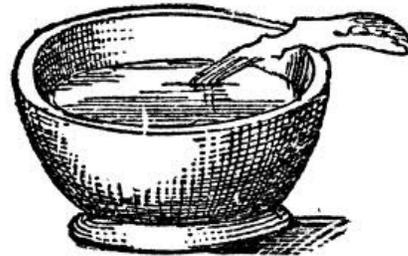
- 1 to 1 1/2 pounds beets, preferably small
- 2 large shallots
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons sherry or other good strong vinegar
- 1 sprig fresh tarragon, minced, if available
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley leaves

1. Peel the beets and shallots. Combine them in a food processor and pulse carefully until the beets are shredded; do not purée. (Or grate the beets by hand and mince the shallots, then combine.) Scrape into a bowl.
2. Toss with the salt, pepper, mustard, oil and vinegar. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Toss in the herbs and serve.

Borscht

Recipe source: *Eating Well*, Jan/Feb 2009

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups beef or vegetable broth
- 1 medium potato, peeled and diced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 1/2 cups steamed cubed beets, 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 teaspoons red-wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley



1. Trim stems from beets and peel the skin with a vegetable peeler. Cut beets into 1/2- to 1-inch-thick cubes, wedges or slices.
2. Place chopped beets in a steamer basket over 1 inch of boiling water in a large pot. Cover and steam over high heat until tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring, until beginning to brown, about 4 minutes. Add broth, potato, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the potato is just tender, about 8 minutes. Add beets and vinegar; return to a boil. Cover and continue cooking until the broth is deep red and the potato is very soft, 2 to 3 minutes more.
4. Combine sour cream and horseradish in a small bowl. Serve the soup with a dollop of the horseradish sour cream and a sprinkle of parsley.

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