

BEETS

Cafeteria | VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org

Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.



Benefits

- Beet leaves are an excellent source of potassium and a good source of vitamin B9 (folic acid) and the mineral magnesium.
- Beet roots are an excellent source of vitamin A and the mineral potassium; they are a good source of vitamin C, B2 (riboflavin) and magnesium.
- One cup of beets delivers about 3 grams of dietary fiber, which helps improve digestion.

Sources: *The Visual Food Encyclopedia*, *The Encyclopedia of Healing Foods*, GMFTS.

Kid-friendly eating tips

- Try pickling thinly-sliced beets!
- Grated raw beets are an excellent addition to a salad
- Beet greens can be treated like spinach or chard: sauté or use for a salad.
- Cube and roast beets, with olive oil and your choice of herbs or with a honey or maple syrup glaze.

Mini-activities

Try introducing beets by grating into salads. This will allow children to slowly adjust to their flavor and add some color to your greens. Toss in some of the beet greens to add extra boost!

Storage Tips

- De-stem beets 1-2 inches about the root crown. Roots will keep for 2-4 weeks in the refrigerator, up to 3 months in a dark cellar.
- Store unwashed greens in a damp paper towel or perforated plastic bag – greens will last 3-5 days in the refrigerator.
- To freeze: Blanch for 2 minutes or cook and purée, and then place in a labeled and dated freezer-grade bag.

Tidbit

Beets are fleshy roots that store well in the winter. Beets come in an array of colors, from golden yellow and deep purple to red and white striped. These roots can be eaten raw or cooked; grate them for a fresh salad, or glaze them with a balsamic-honey blend and roast.

Cooking Tips

- No need to peel, scrub roots clean; trace minerals lie just below the surface of the skin.
- Allow 30-60 minutes to boil or steam beets, depending on size; when the beets are fully cooked, you can easily pierce a fork through them.
- Peeling and chopping before boiling or steaming cuts down on the cooking time.
- Baking or roasting beets preserves their flavor the best.
- Try steaming or sautéing beet greens in place of spinach or chard.

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Varieties

Detroit Dark Red, Early Wonder Tall Top, Forono, Chioggia, & Touchstone Gold

Selection Tip

Choose beets that are firm and free of bruises. Select similar-sized roots to ensure even cooking. Beet Greens: If they are still intact and you plan to cook them, make sure they're not wilted and have a healthy green color. Otherwise, the quality of the greens is not an indication of the quality of the root.



Recipes

Beet Burgers

Yield: 40 Burgers

Ingredients:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 2/3 cups water | 1 qt sunflower seeds, toasted |
| 1 1/3 cups brown rice | 2 cups sesame seeds, toasted |
| 1/4 cup olive oil | 1 cup chopped fresh parsley |
| 1 qt diced onions | 3 Tbsp tamari or soy sauce |
| 8 large eggs | 1 qt grated parmesan cheese |
| 2 qt grated peeled beets | 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour |
| 2 qt grated peeled carrots | 2 tsp kosher salt |

Directions:

1. Bring water to a boil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add rice, reduce heat to low, cover and cook until the rice is tender, about 40 minutes. Set aside to cool.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a medium skillet over high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 8 to 12 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. Preheat convection oven to 350°F. Line 3 sheet pans with parchment paper.
4. Whisk eggs in a large bowl. Stir in the cooled rice, beets, carrots, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds. Fold in the onions, parsley, tamari sauce (or soy sauce), cheese, flour and salt. (Add a little more flour if the mixture seems too sticky.) Using a #12 scoop or 1/3-cup measure, make 40 burgers and place on the prepared pans.
5. Bake until the burgers are browned and the vegetables are tender, 30 to 35 minutes.

Source: *New School Cuisine Cookbook*

Grated Beet and Carrot Salad

Yield: 68 2 oz. servings:

1 oz. serving of red/orange vegetable and
1 oz. serving of other (beets) vegetable

Salad Ingredients:

2 1/2 lbs beets
2 1/2 lbs carrots

Honey-Ginger Dressing Ingredients:

1 Tbsp. grated fresh ginger or 1 tsp. dried ginger
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup olive oil

Directions:

1. Clean and grate vegetables, keeping beets separate. There is no need to peel, just scrub! To save time, shred the vegetables using a food processor.
2. Mix together dressing ingredients.
3. Add dressing to vegetables.
4. Mix in beets last.
5. Let sit 1 hour before serving.

Source: VT FEED "A Guide for Using Local Food in Schools,"
edited by GMFTS