



BC ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS' MARKETS

Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program

All About Beets

Beets are a root vegetable that can be purchased locally from June until December. Beets are colourful and have many health benefits including cancer-fighting and anti-inflammatory properties. They are high in fibre, potassium and folate. Beets do contain more natural sugar than most vegetables (7 grams per ½ cup), however, they are still very low in calories and are a healthy choice.

Beet Facts:

- Beets have an earthy sweet taste and contain a high sugar content.
- Beets typically are purple in colour but can also be golden/yellow or striped.
- Choose beets that are firm and smooth. Avoid beets that are soft, bruised, or shriveled.
- Extra large beets will take longer to cook.
- To store beets, cut off their green leaves 1 inch (2.5cm) from the stem, place them in a plastic bag, and store in the refrigerator crisper for up to three weeks.
- Beet leaves are edible. Cut off beet leaves to 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the stem. Wash and tear them into pieces. Add to a salad or to a stir-fry or use like spinach. The leaves must be eaten right away, as they only stay fresh for one or two days.
- Beets bleed purple. Be careful when using as they can colour your hands, clothes or cutting boards purple and even darken the colour of your urine.

To Prepare Beets:

Beets can be eaten raw or cooked and prepared in many ways:

- Peel and grate raw beets and toss into a salad, or use in a cake.
- Add to a juicer.
- Make into a soup (Borscht).
- Pickle or preserve.
- Bake, boil, steam or microwave beets. Serve cooked beets warm or cold with salt and pepper or with a vinaigrette or butter drizzled on top or toss into a salad.

To Boil

Cut off the dangling root and the green leaves to 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the stem. Lightly clean off dirt. Place in boiling water, turn down heat to medium and simmer for 30-45 minutes or until done. You will know when beets are cooked if you can pierce them with a fork or skewer. Cool slightly and then peel.

To Bake

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Cut off the dangling root and the green leaves to 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the stem. Lightly clean off dirt. Wrap each beet in tin foil and place on a baking sheet. Bake 45-50 minutes or until done. You will know when beets are cooked if you can pierce them with a fork or skewer. Cool slightly and then peel.

To Microwave

Cut the dangling root off and the green leaves, 1 inch (3 cm) above the stem. Lightly clean off dirt. Place beets in a microwave-safe pan with ½ cup of water and cover with parchment paper. Cook on high heat for six minutes. You will know when beets are cooked if you can pierce them with a fork or skewer, if not continue cooking at two minute intervals. Peel when cool to touch.

Beet Recipe:

Roasted Beet and Feta Salad

Serves 4

- 4 medium sized beets
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 small head of red leaf lettuce, washed and torn into bite-sized pieces
- 2 handful of beet leaves, washed and torn into bite-sized pieces
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- salt and pepper to taste

To roast beets, cut off stems to 1 inch (2.5cm) from root and the end pieces. Wash. Wrap individually in foil. Place on a cookie sheet and cook at 400 degrees F. until soft, about 45 minutes – 1 hour. When slightly cooled, remove from foil, peel and slice.

In a small bowl whisk together, vinegar, honey and olive oil. In a salad bowl combine lettuce, beet leaves and onion slices. Pour dressing over salad and toss. Season with salt and pepper. Place beet slices on top and sprinkle feta cheese all over.



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Facilitator Tips - Beets

Start a conversation and add excitement about beets by asking some of the following questions:

- Who eats beets?
- Has anyone tried the rainbow coloured beets? If so, do they taste different than the purple beets?
- Does anyone eat beet greens?
- How do you like to prepare your beets? Boiled, baked microwaved?
- Have you tried cooked beets in a smoothie?
- What is your best beet recipe?
- Does anyone grow beets? If so, do you have any tips on how to grow beets?
- Does anyone make Borscht (beet soup), if so, can you describe how you make it?
- How do you store your beets? To store beets, cut off their green leaves 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the stem, place them in a plastic bag, and store in the refrigerator crisper for up to three weeks. Cooked beets can be frozen for up to 12 months. Beets can also be pickled or preserved.
- Does anyone have any suggestions on how to avoid staining your hands, counters or clothes when using beets?

Beet Demonstration

Some people are intimidated to purchase and cook with beets because they take a long time to cook and can be messy, turning everything purple. This demonstration will show how easy it is to cook beets. Beets can be cooked by roasting, boiling or microwaving. All three methods will create a different result in taste and texture. If possible, and if time permits, demonstrate all three cooking methods or break the group into three and have each group prepare the beets and taste the difference. As a door prize, have everyone place his or her name in a jar and the lucky name drawn wins a bunch of beets.

To avoid turning everything purple, use plastic gloves when handling beets and wear an apron. If you don't have gloves, use a paper towel when handling beets. Wash your hands immediately if they are coloured by the beets.

Ingredients and equipment needed:

- 2-4 bunches of beets with the green tops intact (one to be given away)
- Plastic gloves
- Aprons
- 1-2 small knives
- Tin foil
- 1 -8 x 8 inch square baking pan
- Parchment paper
- 1 cookie sheet
- 1 cooking pot

To Bake: *Beets are high in sugar, roasting them slowly will bring out their natural sugars.*

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Cut off the dangling root and the green leaves to 1 inch (2.5cm) above the stem. Leaves can be washed and torn and thrown into a salad. The leaves will last one or two days before they wilt so need to be used right away. Lightly clean off dirt. Wrap each beet in tin foil and place on a baking sheet. Bake 45-50 minutes or until done. You will know when beets are cooked if you can pierce them with a fork or skewer. Cool slightly and then peel and enjoy.

To Boil: *Boiling beets is a faster way to cook beets; the flavor is not as sweet as baked but equally as tasty.*

Cut off the dangling root and the green leaves to 1 inch (2.5cm) above the stem. Lightly clean off dirt. Place in boiling water, turn down heat to medium and simmer for 30-45 minutes or until done. You will know when beets are cooked if you can pierce them with a fork or skewer. Cool slightly and then peel.

To Microwave: *Microwaving beets is fast and a handy way to cook if there is not an oven.*

Cut the dangling root off and the green leaves, 1 inch (2.5cm) above the stem. Lightly clean off dirt. Place beets in a microwave-safe pan with ½ cup of water and cover with parchment paper. Cook on high heat for six minutes. You will know when beets are cooked if you can pierce them with a fork or skewer, if not continue cooking at two minute intervals. Peel when cool to touch.