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Beets

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

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Utah Local Fresh Season: June through October

Availability: Beets are available year round from the grocery store.

Eating: Beets are a sweet vegetable that taste especially delicious when they are roasted in a hot oven. Roasting beets concentrates the natural sugars they contain, resulting in a delicious sweet tasting vegetable.

Beets are also available canned and often pickled as an alternative to cooking fresh beets.

Selecting: Beets come in many colors including: red, orange, yellow, white, and two-tone. All colors of beets have virtually the same taste.

Select beets that have firm, smooth skins. Small to medium-sized beets will taste the best and be the most tender.

Beet greens, attached to top of root, should be crisp and deeply colored.

Cleaning and Preparing: Avoid washing beets until ready to use. Scrub away dirt with a vegetable brush under running water.

Storing: If beets are purchased with the greens still attached, they should be removed before storing in

the refrigerator. Beet greens are edible and can be used like spinach (cooked or in a salad).

Cut off greens leaving a small portion of the stems still attached. Place the root of the beet in a plastic bag and store in the vegetable crisper drawer of the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Wash and dry the greens and store in a paper towel lined plastic bag. Use within a week.

Cooking: Beets can be prepared in a variety of ways including, raw, boiled and roasted.

Serve Raw: Wash, peel, and grate or slice paper thin; best served cold.

Boil: Rinse, and put approximately 2 pounds of beets into a 4 to 5 quart pan, with enough water to cover. Do not remove tops or the roots on the bottom. Cook 20 to 40 minutes or until tender when pierced with a fork. Let cool a bit then hold under running warm water. Skins should slip off along with the tops and the roots.

Roast: Individually wrap well-scrubbed beets with a double layer of foil; leave stem and roots on; roast at 400°F in the oven for 45 to 70 minutes.

Quick Roast: Scrub, but do not peel beets; slice 1/2 inch thick; toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper; spread out in single layer on baking sheet; roast at 450°F for 15 to 20 minutes or until tender.

Nutrition Highlights: Beets are a great source of folate, an important nutrient for preventing birth defects.

Growing: See “Beets in the Garden” by Dan Drost and Wade Bitner available at: http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_2004-11.pdf.

Preserving: Beets can be canned plain or pickled. For recipes go to the National Center for Home Food Preservation, www.uga.edu/nchfp.

References:

1. www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
2. www.produceoasis.com
3. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/beet.cfm>
4. <https://utahsown.utah.gov/UtahsOwn-Harvestdategraph.htm>
5. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beetroot>
6. http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/can_04/beets.html

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Basic Roasted Beets Recipe

Roasting beets concentrates their natural sweetness and couldn’t be easier.

- 3 medium beets
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Heat the oven to 375°F and arrange a rack in the middle. Rinse the beets and trim off any leafy tops. Wrap in aluminum foil and place in the oven. Roast until tender and easily pierced with a knife, approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Remove from the oven and let cool.

When the beets are cool enough to handle, peel the beets under running water which also cools them faster and minimizes finger-staining.

To serve, slice the beets, drizzle with olive oil, and season with salt, and pepper. Serve hot or cool.

Beet and Spinach Couscous

Adapted from fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Prep time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons shallots or green onions, chopped
- 1 ½ cups beets, fresh, thinly sliced
- 1 cup couscous, uncooked
- 1 ¼ cups water
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup spinach leaves or beet greens

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots and beets. Cook for about 5 minutes. Stir in couscous and cook for another minute. Add water and salt. Let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until couscous is cooked and looks swollen. Remove from heat stirring gently until greens wilt. Serve warm.