

# BEETS



Beets are in season from June through October.

## Tips for selecting beets

Choose small- to medium-sized beets with a firm, smooth skin and a deep crimson color. The leaves should be dark green and crisp. Do not choose beets if they are shriveled, soft, or if the skins are rough or flabby.

## Storage

Cut off the leaves leaving 2 inches of the stem. Wash beets thoroughly. Place them in a paper bag and store in the refrigerator for up to one week.

## Preparation

Beets can be eaten cooked or raw. Do not peel before cooking or the color will bleed out. After cooking, skins will slip off easily. To eat raw, scrub the skins and grate or thinly slice beets to add to salad or slaw. Beets can also be pickled or juiced.

## Boil

Bring water to a boil, add the beets, bring back to a boil, then cover and reduce the heat to low. It takes approximately 40 minutes for beets to soften.

## Bake

Carve an "x" into both sides of the beet. Wrap in aluminum foil and place on the oven rack. Bake at 425°F for about 50 minutes.

## Key nutrients

- Carbohydrates for energy
- Fiber to prevent constipation
- Folate to prevent birth defects and reduce the risk of heart disease
- Potassium to help maintain normal blood pressure

## Recipes

### Rainbow beet and potato puree

1 pound (3 medium) potatoes, peeled and cubed

½ pound beets, cooked, peeled, and chopped

¼ cup water

½ cup skim milk

1 tablespoon butter or margarine (optional)

Place potatoes, beets, and water in a 2-quart microwave dish and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on high 8 to 9 minutes then let stand 3 minutes. Remove plastic. Add milk

and margarine. Mash with potato masher, leaving some vegetable texture. Serves 4; 165 Cal; 3 g fat.

### Beet soup with dill & yogurt

1 tablespoon oil

1 medium onion, sliced

1 pound beets, cooked, peeled, and coarsely diced

1 quart chicken broth

¾ cup plain yogurt

3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

Heat the oil in a pan over low heat. Add onions and stir for 2 minutes. Add beets. Cook covered for about 35 minutes in 1 cup broth, or until beets are falling apart. Add remaining stock and salt. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain and reserve the liquid. Transfer beets to a blender or food processor and puree until smooth or mash with a potato masher. Return the puree to the pan and add reserved liquid. Serve the soup with 2 tablespoons of yogurt and sprinkle the yogurt with chopped dill. Serves 6; 110 Cal; 4 g fat.



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