

ABOUT BEETS

Beets are in the same family as spinach, amaranth, and carnations. Around 800 BC, an Assyrian text describes beets growing in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the wonders of the ancient world. Red beets get their color from a pigment called betalain. Since the 16th century, beet juice has been used as a natural red dye. It was even used as a hair dye. The leafy greens of the beet are edible. Raw beets are an excellent source of folate and a very good source of manganese and potassium. Beet greens are an excellent source of vitamins A and C.



Choose:

- ◆ Small or medium-sized beets with roots that are firm, smooth-skinned and deep in color. Smaller, younger beets may be so tender that peeling won't be needed.
- ◆ Look for greens that appear fresh, tender, and have a lively green color

Avoid:

- ◆ Beets that have spots, bruises or soft, wet areas, all of which indicate spoilage
- ◆ Shriveled or flabby beets should also be avoided as these are signs that the roots are aged, tough, and fibrous

Storage:

Cut the greens and their stems from the beet root, so they do not pull away moisture from the root. Leave about two inches of the stem attached to prevent the roots from "bleeding". Do not wash the beets before storing. Place them in a plastic bag and wrap the bag squeezing out as much of the air as possible, and place in refrigerator. Store the unwashed greens in a separate plastic bag squeezing out as much as air as possible and place in refrigerator.

Serving Tip:

- ◆ Cook until just fork tender as overcooking beets removes the healthy phytonutrients in them.
- ◆ Grate raw beets for a delicious and colorful addition to salads or as a decorative garnish for soups.
- ◆ Cook beet greens as you would spinach or Swiss chard.

BEETS

Grated Beet Salad



Yield: 6 servings
Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

3-4 tablespoons vinaigrette (see recipe on page 61)
3 medium beets, peeled and grated
4 medium carrots, peeled and grated
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. In a large bowl, add beets, carrots, parsley and vinaigrette. Toss to combine.
2. Taste and adjust for seasoning.
3. Serve.

Notes: _____



Let your child help pour the beets, carrots, and parsley in the bowl, while you stir.

Beet Quesadillas

Yield: 4 servings
Time: 30 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 medium-size onion, sliced very thinly
- 3-4 unpeeled medium red or golden yellow beet, sliced very thinly
- 1 bunch (4 to 5 cups) beet greens, washed and chopped finely
- 1 teaspoon mild chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons water
- Cooking spray
- 6 (8-inch) or 3 (10-inch) whole wheat tortillas
- 1 heaping cup grated Monterey Jack, mozzarella, or cheddar cheese

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a 10- or 12-inch skillet. Add the onion and beets, and cook over medium-high heat for about 6 minutes, stirring often.
2. Add the greens, chili powder, cumin, oregano, salt, and water, and stir until the spices and salt are well mixed. Cook over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft.
3. Transfer the cooked vegetables to a colander over the sink. Heat a clean skillet over medium-low heat and grease lightly with cooking spray.
4. Lay a tortilla in the pan, then spread about 2 tablespoons of cheese over half of the tortilla. Put on 2 to 3 heaping tablespoons of the cooked beet mixture. Spread another tablespoon of cheese over the vegetables, then fold the tortilla in half and flip it with a spatula. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes on each side, until the tortilla is nicely browned and the cheese is melted through.
5. Repeat with the remaining tortillas, cheese and vegetables. Cut into wedges and serve.