

Beet / Beetroot Cooking Tips

Beets, known as beetroot in many areas of the world, seems to be one of those vegetables you either love or hate. The rich maroon flesh of this root vegetable is naturally sweet and nutritious. As an added bonus, the leaves are also edible and can be prepared in the same manner as Swiss chard (also known as the spinach beet). If you have been making do with canned beets, you simply must try fresh beets for true flavor even beet-haters will enjoy.

Beet / Beetroot Cooking Tips

- Be gentle when washing beets. You want the thin skin to remain intact for cooking.
- Although beets can be eaten raw, they are generally boiled, baked, steamed, fried, grilled or otherwise cooked before eating.
- Choose beets of uniform size to promote even cooking.
- To retain nutrients and color, boil, bake or steam without peeling first. The skin will easily rub off under cold running water after they are cooked.
- When trimming, leave at least an inch of the leaf stems attached and do not remove the root. The stem and root are removed after cooking.
- If you must peel before cooking, a swivel vegetable peeler works better than a paring knife.
- For best flavor, bake beets instead of boiling or steaming. Wrap them in foil to avoid staining.
- Plan on 3 to 4 small beets per serving.
- 3 medium beets = about 2 pounds fresh beets with tops
- 1 pound fresh beets trimmed = about 2 cups sliced or chopped
- 1 pound fresh beets trimmed = 3 to 4 servings
- 1 16-ounce canned whole beets = about 2 cups
- 1 8-ounce can sliced beets = about 1 cup
- Complementary herbs and spices include allspice, bay leaf, cloves, chives, dill weed, garlic, mustard seed, thyme, and citrus.
- To avoid staining your fingers, wear rubber gloves when handling beets.
- To remove beet juice from fingers, rub with wet salt and lemon juice and then wash with soap and water. For cutting boards and plastic containers, use a bleach solution.
- 1 Tablespoon of vinegar added to beet cooking water will not only reduce the odor of the cooking beets, but also help them retain their bright color.

- For older beets, try adding a pinch each of sugar and salt to each cup of cooking water to revive sweetness and color.
- Beets are naturally high in sodium, so no salt is necessary in the cooking water.
- To microwave whole beets, pierce the skin and place one pound in a micro-proof dish with 2 Tablespoons of water. Cook on high for 9 to 12 minutes. Let rest for 5 minutes before cooling and peeling.
- To avoid bleeding of color into other ingredients, add beets just before serving if possible.
- Grated raw beets make a tasty addition to salads.