

Beet Valentines

Crafty Veggies:

Have fun with heart-healthy beets for Valentine's Day!

Beet juice as a natural dye

Red beets contain the pigment betanin, which can be used to dye paper, fabric, and even skin (temporarily, of course!) red or pink.

Creating beet stamps and ink

Create your own beet ink by roughly chopping beets, placing them in a large pot and covering with twice the amount of water as your chopped beets (ie. for two cups of chopped beets, use four cups of water). Bring to a boil, then simmer for about an hour. Add a small amount of vinegar and salt to help preserve the "ink". You can create beet stamps by cutting thin slices of beet root (1/4") and then use a cookie cutter to cut out a section of beet, or cut off a small portion of the beet (to create a flat surface) and carve a design right into the beet! To minimize mess, we recommend leaving the peels on if using this method. Use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to make heart-shaped stamps for your valentine cards!

Did You Know?

- The scientific name for beets is *Beta vulgaris*.
- Beets come from the Chenopodiaceae, or Goosefoot family, which includes spinach, chard, lamb's quarters and quinoa.

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February Harvest of the Month

Beets



Beet recipes and fun facts inside!



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Whole Wheat Pasta with Beets and Goat Cheese Recipe

Prep time: 15 min
Cook time: 60 minutes
Estimated Cost: \$8
Serves four.

Ingredients:

1 16 oz. package of whole wheat penne or other pasta
1 bunch beets, greens attached
1 tsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Separate beet greens from root. Set greens aside. Rinse and scrub beet roots to remove any debris. Leave peels and tails on- beets are much easier to peel after being cooked. Wrap each beet in a layer of aluminum foil. Place aluminum foil wrapped beets in the preheated oven for 35-45 minutes, or until tender and easily pierced by a fork.

Remove beets from oven and set aside to cool. Separate beet greens from thick sections of stem and cut into 1/2" strips. Place olive oil in a medium sauce pot and turn heat to "low". Add minced garlic. When garlic is fragrant, add beet greens. Sauté for 2-3 minutes, or until beet greens have wilted and taken on a dark green color. Remove from heat.

In a large sauce pot, bring water to a boil. Cook pasta according to package directions. Remove cooled beets from foil, peel, and cut into 1" chunks.

Drain pasta using a colander. Place pasta, chopped beets, and goat cheese in the pot with the beet greens. Stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



Beet Buyer's Tip

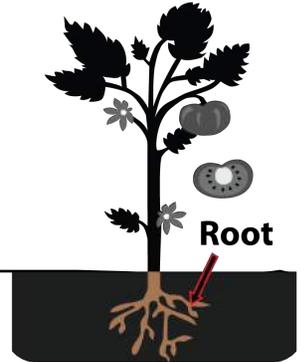
Try to find beets with the greens still attached. If the greens have been removed, look for beets with a bit more of the stem intact. Look for beets that are firm, round, smooth, with deep color and an unblemished surface.



Fun Facts About Beets

Plant Parts

- Beets are a root vegetable, which means the part of the plant we most commonly eat grows underground!
- Beet roots contain more sugar than any other vegetable. They are sweetest when roasted or steamed.



Origins

- In some form, the beet was likely consumed in prehistoric times. It did not appear in the United States until the 19th century.
- The ancient Romans primarily used beet greens for their medicinal quality but did not eat the root. Consumption of beet roots became popular in the 16th century.

Shapes, Sizes and Colors



- Beets come in red, white, golden orange, and candy striped (chioggia) colors. Golden beets tend to be the most mild in flavor and might be a good choice to entice a timid beet eater.
- Beet greens are completely edible- they are easy to cook and taste similar to spinach!

Looking for locally grown beets?

Visit localdifference.org to search for local food, farms, and retailers.