



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

# BEETS



Beets are a root vegetable that grow in the ground. Beets belong to the Amaranthaceae family. Wild golden beets called “sea beets” were first found along the seashore of the Eastern Mediterranean in North Africa and Europe. Red beets were first farmed for their leafy green stalks in Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. By the 15th century, beet roots were being farmed for eating in Europe. European immigrants brought them to North America between the 16th and 17th centuries. They are a firm vegetable with an earthy to tart flavor and can be eaten fresh or cooked. Beets are often boiled, juiced, grilled, pickled, sautéed, steamed, or roasted. Beet greens are also edible raw, juiced, steamed, or sautéed. Michigan beets are harvested from July through late October.



## BEETS ARE

- Beets are an excellent source of folate. Folate supports the production of healthy red blood cells and is important during periods of rapid growth, like pregnancy.
- Beets are a source of vitamin C\*. Vitamin C is important to the body’s tissues and supports a healthy immune system.
- Beets are a source of fiber. Fiber helps us feel fuller and benefits the digestive and cardiovascular systems.
- Beets are a source of potassium. Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure.

*\*Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*



## MICHIGAN MADE

Beets grow well in cool climates and are grown everywhere in Michigan. The most common types of beets grown for eating in Michigan include Detroit Red, Gladiator, Honey Red, Ruby Queen, and Warrior.

## FUN FACTS

- Beets are also called “table beets” or “garden beets” and are related to sugar beets and Swiss chard.
- Fresh beets are available “topped” with the greens removed or “bunched” with greens intact.
- Beets can be red, white, purple, orange, yellow (golden), or striped like a candy cane.
- The Detroit Red beet was introduced in 1892 by D.M. Ferry on his 850-acre seed farm just north of Detroit and is considered the standard for red beets.

## BUYING AND STORING

- Select beets that are firm, relatively smooth, and free of nicks and cracks.
- When choosing bunched beets, the greens should be fresh and free from decay.
- Store fresh or cooked beets in a plastic bag or airtight container.
- Fresh beets will keep in the refrigerator for up to two weeks, cooked beets up to one week, and frozen cooked beets up to six months.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.

## MORE THAN FRESH

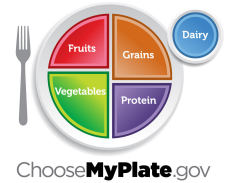
In addition to fresh, beets are available juiced, canned, pickled, or frozen. When buying packaged beets, read labels and choose beets that are low sodium (salt) with low or no added sugar, and beet juice that is 100% juice. Always choose pasteurized beet juice over unpasteurized. Unpasteurized juice can contain harmful bacteria.



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## EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Beets are part of the Vegetable Group. Most people need 2–3 cups of vegetables per day. For more information visit: [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov).



## IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

## BEAUTIFUL BEET SALAD

Time: 10 minutes | Makes: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cup

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 208, Carbohydrate 8g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 5g, Total Fat 18g, Saturated Fat 4g, Cholesterol 11mg, Sodium 277mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



### INGREDIENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil  | 6 ounces fresh baby spinach                                     |
| 2 tablespoons balsamic or red wine vinegar                                  | 1 cup roasted beets, diced (or canned beets, drained and diced) |
| ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt  | ⅓ cup nuts or seeds, finely chopped                             |
| ⅓ teaspoon ground black pepper, plus a little more (reserved for last step) | ⅓ cup feta cheese, crumbled                                     |

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In large bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper.
2. Add remaining ingredients. Mix gently and serve.

### CHANGE IT UP

- Add a few tablespoons of chopped fresh herbs, such as chives or thyme.
- Add 2 tablespoons or so of lemon zest.
- Add 1 cup canned mandarin oranges packed in 100% juice or water, drained.

### TRY THIS

- Add cooked beets (roasted, canned, or pickled) to rice or other grain dishes.
- Modify hummus recipes with half cooked beets and half garbanzo beans.
- Make a smoothie with cooked beets, fresh apples, and 100% orange or apple juice.
- Sauté beet greens with chopped garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil.

