

Early Care & Education  
Kitchen Bites

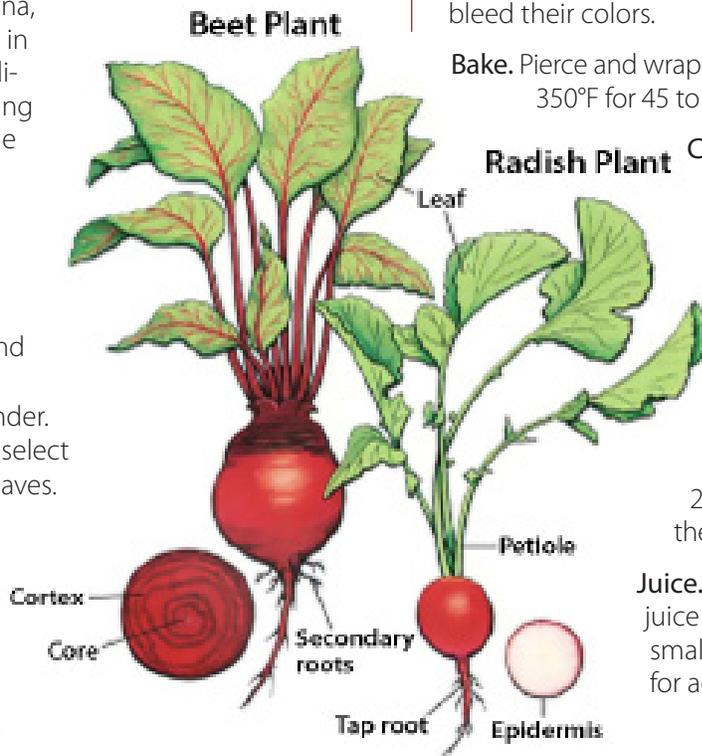
# Beets

## Did You Know

- The Romans were some of the first people to cultivate and develop beets for their roots as well as use them for feeding animals. The Greeks were the first people to consume both the roots and leaves.
- The color of beet roots can range from dark purple to bright red, yellow, or white. When cut transversely, the roots show light and dark rings, sometimes alternating. The Chioggia beet is red and white-striped and is nicknamed the "candy cane" beet.
- Beets have the highest sugar content of any vegetable.
- While different in nutrient composition and culinary use, sugar beets are an important part of Montana's economy. Montana is a top producer of sugar beets, harvesting nearly 1.5 million pounds from 44,000 acres in 2014!
- Although beets are not grown in the winter in Montana, they can be kept fresh in the right storage conditions for months, making them a good vegetable for winter months.

## Selection

Select beets with firm skins. Beets should be round with a slender tap root. Smaller beets are more tender. If greens are still attached, select beets with fresh looking leaves. Small beets (about a half-inch in diameter) are good for eating raw. Medium and large-sized beets are best for cooking. Very large beets (more than three inches in



diameter) may be too woody for eating. When purchasing canned beets, choose low-sodium or no salt added varieties.

## Storage

Whole beets can be stored in a plastic bag in a refrigerator for up to two weeks. Beets can also be stored in a cold, humid cellar. Beet greens should be removed from the beet root for storage and can be used within a few days.

## Cooking

Beets are a versatile food that can be eaten roasted, steamed, raw, or pickled. Try shredding raw beets for salads. Beets will bleed their red color onto other foods. Cook separately and add beets at the end of recipes to avoid turning your entire dish pink. Also try golden varieties or Chioggia (red/white striped), which do not bleed their colors.

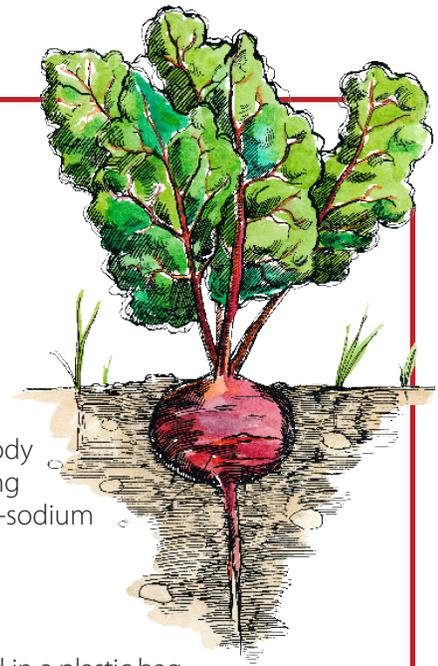
**Bake.** Pierce and wrap washed beets in foil and bake at 350°F for 45 to 90 minutes or until tender.

**Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature (135°F). Questions? Click on [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov).

**Grill.** Place 1/2-inch thick slices in a plastic bag; drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings. Shake until beets are coated, then put slices on skewers over a preheated (medium-high heat) grill. Cook 15-20 minutes or until tender, turning the skewer occasionally.

**Juice.** Combine one cup 100% orange juice or apple juice and the juice of one small beet in a juicer. Add to a smoothie for added flavor and nutrition.

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## Magenta Root Slaw

HACCP Process:  1 – No Cook     2 – Cook & Same Day Serve     3 – Cook, Cool, Reheat, Serve     4 – SOP Controlled

Ingredients	6 Servings	25 Servings	Directions
Fresh ginger	2 1/2 tsp	1/4 cup	1. Peel and chop ginger. Pulse in food processor fitted with steel blade until ground. 2. Trim and peel carrots, beets, and parsnips. Shred in food processor fitted with shredding disk, or by hand. 3. Whisk together honey, lemon juice, and salt in a large bowl. Add shredded vegetables and toss to combine. Critical Control Point: hold and serve at $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ .
Carrots	3/4 cup	3 1/3 cups	
Beets	3/4 cup	3 cups	
Parsnips	3/4 cup	3 cups	
Honey	1 Tbsp	1/4 cup	
Lemon juice, <i>fresh or bottled</i>	2 1/2 tsp	3 1/2 Tbsp	
Kosher Salt	Pinch	1/4 tsp	

Serving Size 1/4 cup                      Pan Size \_\_\_\_\_                      Yield 6, 25

Oven Temperature & Baking Time:                      Temperature \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes \_\_\_\_\_                      Convection                      Temperature \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes \_\_\_\_\_

Meal Component Fulfillment (Based on Serving Size) 1 Serving Provides:    • 1/4 cup other vegetable

**Nutrition Analysis** : Serving Size: 1/4 cup

<u>36</u> Calories (kcal)	<u>.02</u> Saturated Fat (g)	<u>.25</u> Iron (mg)
<u>.52</u> Protein (g)	<u>2.5%</u> Calories from Total Fat (%)	<u>19.47</u> Calcium (mg)
<u>8.90</u> Carbohydrate (g)	<u>2833.36</u> Vitamin A (IU)	<u>45.28</u> Sodium (mg)
<u>.10</u> Total Fat (g)	<u>5.04</u> Vitamin C (mg)	<u>1.56</u> Dietary Fiber (g)

### Notes:

Source: Vermont FEED New School Cuisine Cookbook (<http://vtfeed.org/resources/new-school-cuisine-nutritious-and-seasonal-recipes-school-cooks-school-cooks>)



**Roast.** Slice beets in 1/2-inch thick pieces. Place in a plastic bag and drizzle with olive oil and seasonings. Shake until beets are coated. Spread on baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 30-40 minutes or until tender.

**Salad greens.** Rinse leaves thoroughly before adding to a salad. Tender greens are excellent for seasonal salads.

**Season.** To enhance the flavor, use allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, dill weed, ginger or nutmeg.

**Stir-fry or soup.** Sliced beets and their leaves are a colorful addition to stir-fry and homemade soup.

*Adapted from Beet Food Fact Sheet developed by Montana State University Extension. For the full fact sheet and other resources, visit: <https://nutrition.msuextension.org/>.*

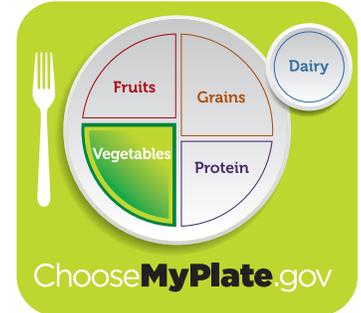
## Nutrition Information

Beets, like many vegetables, are rich in many nutrients. In particular, beets provide potassium, vitamin A, and riboflavin. Also, beets are high in folate and magnesium.

## Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:

[mtharvestofthemoth.org](http://mtharvestofthemoth.org)



Red Beet



Chioggia Beet



Golden Beet

## 4 Montana Harvest of the Month: Beets



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: [mtharvestofthemoth.org](http://mtharvestofthemoth.org)

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